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ENVIRONMENTAL DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY AND THE SEARCH FOR ADMINISTRATIVE LEGITIMACY: 
A LEGAL POSITIVISM APPROACH

Michael Ray Harris*

The failure of regulatory systems over the past two decades to lessen the environment degradation associated with modern human economic output has begun to undermine the legitimacy of environmental lawmaking in the United States and around the world. Recent scholarship suggests that reversal of this trend will require a breach of the environmental administrative apparatus by democratization of a particular kind, namely the inclusion of greater public discourse within the context of regulatory decision-making. This Article examines this claim through the lens of modern legal positivism. Legal positivism provides the tools necessary to test for and identify the specific structural deficiencies of the administrative state as an environmental lawmaking institution. More importantly, legal positivism can be used to determine which changes to agency practice and procedure—of the many scholarly proposals to do so—would most likely be accepted by the U.S. legal system as a means to correct these deficiencies. To do so, however, American legal positivists must overcome their obsession with the U.S. Constitution as the measure of legal legitimacy in the American system. Instead, legitimacy of the environmental administrative state ultimately relies on fashioning rulemaking procedures that address American's innate distrust of official power. The view of a reformed regulatory state presented in this Article is one where regulators continue to function as the technical and scientific experts, and in making policy determinations weigh the expert knowledge with the informed opinion of electorate and peer officials in the political branches of our government.

INTRODUCTION

No one can seriously deny that the scope and complexity of environmental problems facing the world today are of the very nature that the architects of the New Deal felt would require “institutions having flexibility, expertise, managerial capacity, political accountability, and powers of initiative” well beyond that of any one branch of government to solve.¹ The task of addressing

* Assistant Professor of Law, University of Denver, Sturm College of Law. I want to thank Justin Marceau, Christopher Brown, and Sarah Coleman for their very insightful comments; and to Sarah April and Katherine Johnston for their diligent research and editing.

¹ Cass R. Sunstein, Law and Administration After Chevron, 90 COLUM. L. REV. 2071, 2072 (1990); see also Mark Seidenfeld, A Civic Republican Justification for the Bureaucratic State, 105 HARV. L. REV. 1511, 1518 (1992) (“[T]he New Deal contemplated that Congress should identify an area in need of regulatory control and turn the expert agency loose to
continued industrial-era environmental concerns—air, water, and land pollution—require vast technical expertise, and emerging post-industrial environmental issues—climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, desertification, etc.—are complex, global problems that call for monumental new regulatory efforts. Therefore, if we intend to save our natural world from further environmental harm, we must first rescue the troubled American administrative state.

The problem, of course, is that despite three-quarters of a century since the birth of modern administrative law, the political legitimacy of our nation’s grandest structural reform of government since ratification of the U.S. Constitution is still unsettled in many Americans’ minds. There is both a longstanding mistrust of agencies as technical regulators in this nation and, more im-

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2. See generally Robin Morris Collin & Robert William Collin, Where Did All the Blue Skies Go? Sustainability and Equity: The New Paradigm, 9 J. Env. L. & Litig. 399, 401-03 (1994). As one commentator recognized, “[j]ust listing some of the many pressing environmental issues [needing regulation] can lead to despondency: species extinction, deforestation, desertification, toxic waste, acid rain, global climate change, and severe air and water pollution in large cities and poor countries.” Eric W. Orts, Reflexive Environmental Law, 89 Nw. U. L. Rev. 1227, 1230 (1995). This has led some, including Justice Stephen Breyer, to call for “the creation of a superagency larger and more powerful than the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to bring order to the irrational potpourri” of existing environmental statutory mandates imposed on the agency. Id. at 1231 (citing Stephen Breyer, Breaking the Vicious Circle: Toward Effective Risk Regulation 59-72 (1993)).


4. While independent regulatory agencies existed well before the New Deal, the activities of these agencies were largely discrete and limited in nature, primarily aimed at particularized fields of economic activity. Robert L. Rabin, Federal Regulation in Historical Perspective, 38 Stan. L. Rev. 1189, 1252 (1986). The New Deal reforms accomplished by the Roosevelt administration in the 1930s opened the door for the burgeoning, modern day administrative state. Id. at 1262-63; see also Dill, supra note 1, at 953 (“Since their widespread introduction during the New Deal, federal administrative agencies have played an increasingly important role in developing and implementing congressional policies in various areas of national concern.”).

5. See, e.g., David L. Markell, Understanding Citizen Perspectives on Government Decision Making Processes as a Way to Improve the Administrative State, 36 Env. L. 651, 653 (2006); Louis J. Virelli III, Scientific Peer Review and Administrative Legitimacy, 61 Admin. L. Rev. 723, 724 (2009). Indeed, it has been said that the question “Why is there an administrative state?” is not merely an academic question, but has been observed to “reflect[ ] the deepest of anxieties of our political culture.” Peter H. Schuck, Foundations of Administrative Law 7 (2d ed. 2004).

portantly, unending controversy over whether the political choices inherently involved in agency rulemaking should be left at all to institutions outside our constitutional tripartite national government.7 As Professor James O. Freedman observed, "[t]he enduring sense of crisis historically associated with the administrative agencies seems to suggest that something more serious than merely routine criticism is at work."8 That something, perhaps, is "the manifestation of a deeper uneasiness over the place and function of the administrative process in American government."9

This unease is not without merit. In the field of environmental regulation, it is obvious that administrators increasingly fail, often for political reasons, to make the painful public policy choices required by our nation's environmental laws.10 The past few decades have seen few significant new environmental regulatory efforts in this country. Environmental controls in the United States—once considered among the most stringent legal protections for public health, welfare, wildlife, and natural resources in the world—are now regarded as ineffective. Concerns about the poor quality of our air and water are now regularly in the news,11 and with regards to what may be the most significant crisis to ever face humankind—climate change—we have only just begun to contemplate a national regulatory plan.12 In short, despite pressing needs, regulators seem fearful to act, leaving us with a dismal regulatory record on public health and environmental issues in recent decades.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that an emerging body of scholarly literature, which I will group and broadly define

American environmental regulatory landscape as a battleground wrought with distrust and conflict); Richard J. Lazarus, The Tragedy of Distrust in the Implementation of Federal Environmental Law, LAW & CONTEMP. PROBS., Autumn 1991, at 311 (discussing the "destructive cycle" of agency distrust and failure).
9. Id.
10. See Lisa Heinzerling, Selling Pollution, Forcing Democracy, 14 STAN. ENVTL. L.J. 300, 300 (1995) ("Cleaning the air can foul the water; saving the salmon might threaten the logger; preserving our climate could darken our rooms.").
as Environmental Deliberative Democracy (EDD), seeks to bring to an end the top-down, authoritarian nature of the current regulatory system. EDD calls for regulatory reforms to make public deliberation, and civic engagement, a required component of environmental decision-making to make the environmental bureaucracy accountable directly to the people. EDD is the product of the environmental community's realization that our existing form of government "has lost its democratic character just as it has also sacrificed its ecological sustainability." Current legal structures, such as the administrative state, are designed to make citizens mere competitors in the lawmaking process, driving them to abandon all commitments to greater social needs and focus instead on their narrow self-defined interest in the regulatory outcome. Administrative decision-making, in particular, lacks sufficient democratic elements to ensure that rulemaking is both a procedurally legitimate and substantively effective means to protect environmental rights, both human and non-human alike.

Beyond its proposals for regulatory change, EDD also has the potential to transform sixty years of discourse among economists, political scientists, and legal scholars regarding the generational discontent with the administrative state. Previously offered theories attempted to legitimize the administrative state largely as a

14. See infra Part II.A.
15. Such proposals advance, for example, use of citizen consultations, forms, or juries in all or part of the regulatory process; others go further and advocate for partial or total citizen control of regulatory outcomes. See infra notes 129–134 and accompanying text.
17. See id.; see also Dorothy A. Brown, The Invisibility Factor: The Limits of Public Choice Theory and Public Institutions, 74 WASH. U. L.Q. 179, 182 (1996) ("[Legislation] results from a 'legislative auction' where the special interest group with the highest 'bid' wins the legislator's services. The special interest group seeks legislation that benefits its group members, who have a high stake in the legislative outcome. The legislator receives the bid, and in turn, the special interest group receives the desired legislation."
18. See generally Jennifer Nou, Note, Regulating the Rulemakers: A Proposal for Deliberative Cost-Benefit Analysis, 26 YALE L. & POL'Y REV. 601, 629–30 (2008) (discussing "the democratic deficit created by administrative delegation"). For EDD advocates, the system must not only be democratic in nature, but representation must be extended "to entities which cannot participate in the decision-making process, like future generations, animals, plants and the nature as a whole, whose interests, though, can be represented by the present humans." James Wong, Debating Environmental Democracy: A Social Choice Theory Perspective 5 (July 2008) (unpublished conference paper), http://www.keele.ac.uk/research/lpj/ecprsumschool/Papers/James%20Wong.pdf (on file with the University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform).
19. See FREEDMAN, supra note 8, at 9; see also Cynthia R. Farina, The Consent of the Governed: Against Simple Rules for a Complex World, 72 CHI.-KENT L. REV. 987, 987 (1997) ("Like an intriguing but awkward family heirloom, the legitimacy problem is handed down from generation to generation of administrative law scholars.").
basis of political necessity, but have failed to provide real legitimacy to the administrative state as measured, for instance, by environmental regulatory outcomes. EDD, on the other hand, accepts the failure of the administrative state in our system, and assigns that failure to its inability to produce rules in a manner consistent with the (democratic) properties our society deems essential to constitute a norm that is seen as legally valid. EDD thus attempts to cure, rather than sidestep, our uneasiness with bureaucracy.

It is, however, only upon examination of EDD proposals through the lens of modern legal positivism that the potential for legitimizing the environmental administrative state is truly revealed. As an initial matter, a legal positivist would reject existing theories that

20. For example, the pluralistic democracy theory seeks to justify the administrative state largely on the basis that agencies are in an equal, if not better, position than constitutional branches to evaluate and determine societal preferences with regards to distributing governmental benefits. See generally Croley, supra note 7, at 3–6. As Professor Croley notes, “theories” in this context is “used somewhat loosely . . . as a less awkward term for what could instead be called ‘perspectives’ or ‘visions’ of administrative regulation.” Id. at 4. Like capitalist markets, pluralistic democracy embraces regulatory deal-making. In essence, the government acts to “implement deals that divide political spoils according to the pre-political preferences of interest groups.” Seidenfeld, supra note 1, at 1514. Accordingly, regulators should react only to those interest groups that find the status quo sufficiently intolerable to incur the cost of complaining and seeking change. Id. at 1521. Several theories have been spawned from pluralistic democracy thought, including public choice theory, neopluralist theory, and public interest theory. As Professor Croley has summarized these theories:

The public choice account holds . . . that agencies deliver regulatory benefits to well organized political interest groups, which profit at the expense of the general, unorganized public. The neopluralist theory also takes organized interest groups to be central to understanding regulation. On the neopluralist view, however, many interest groups with opposing interests compete for favorable regulation, and that competition is less lopsided than the public choice view contemplates. Because the result of interest-group competition often crudely reflects general (public) interests, . . . [w]hereas the neopluralist focuses on interest-group competition . . . the public interest theorist concentrates on the general public’s ability to monitor regulatory decisionmakers. Where . . . the relevant decisionmakers operate without any oversight, they tend to deliver regulatory benefits [instead] to well organized interest groups at the public’s expense.

Croley, supra note 7, at 5.

21. Van Doren, supra note 3, at 479 ("[C]ourt decisions in environmental law seem to mirror indeterminacy over time, as the regulatory state produces chaos, cycling, and unpredictability.").

22. See infra Part II.A.

justify the administrative state based on mere appeal to a normative presupposition for its existence. Rather, legal positivism teaches us that the validity of a legal system is solely dependent on its observation of, and obedience to, the rules constituting its foundation. One of these foundational rules is H.L.A. Hart's "rule of recognition," which, vaguely put, states that every legal system contains one underlying rule that sets out the criteria or properties that other rules within that system must possess to be recognized as a valid rule of that system. The rule of recognition works to reconcile the precise type of normative, second-order uncertainty with the administrative state that has been identified by EDD scholars: the legitimacy of public officials (or institutions) to resolve first-order, environmental public policy disputes.

This Article takes legal positivism from theory to practice by applying it to the troubled administrative state in the context of EDD. The Article demonstrates that a conflict exists between the administrative state and rule of recognition used to measure the validity of lawmaking institutions in our system. However, because democratic institutions (including the environmental administrative apparatus in this country) are structural mechanisms, it is therefore possible, as EDD advocates, to construct specific legal changes to agency practice and procedure to correct the identified conflict. With that in mind, however, it makes little sense to continue to suggest that administrative reform proposals be implemented, without first assessing whether the specific structural changes offered would better ensure legitimacy based upon fidelity to the rule of recognition.

Part I introduces the foundations of modern legal positivism thought. Relying primarily on H.L.A Hart's theories, Part II seeks

24. See Leslie Green, Legal Positivism, in STANFORD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILOSOPHY (2010), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/legal-positivism/ ("The ultimate criterion of validity in a legal system is neither a legal norm nor a presupposed norm . . . ."); Stephen V. Carey, Comment, What is the Rule of Recognition in the United States?, 157 U. PA. L. REV. 1161, 1163 n.1 (2009) ("Positivism is a broad concept . . . but it may be defined generally as the theory that legal rules are valid only because they are enacted by an existing political authority or accepted as binding in a given society, not because they are grounded in morality or in natural law." (internal quotation marks and alterations omitted)).


27. Hart's own treatment and description of the rule has been called "frustratingly unclear." Shapiro, supra note 25, at 235.

28. HART, supra note 26, at 100–03; David Dyzenhaus, The Demise of Legal Positivism?, 119 HARV. L. REV. F. 112, 112 (2006); Shapiro, supra note 25, at 238.

29. See Shapiro, supra note 25, at 242, 250–52.
to test legitimacy of the environmental administrative state as a
lawmaking institution in our legal system. If officials in our system
consistently demonstrate that they do not perceive agencies as valid
legal actors, or bestow upon the norms derived from agency action
the official respect equal to that expected to be granted sources of
law in our society, then indeed the accepted conditions for legiti-
macy as a lawmaker are not met. Reflection on recent environ-
mental administrative law problems demonstrates that
agency authority is regularly treated with substantially less respect
and deference (in other words, comity) by the courts, the Execu-
tive Branch, and, to a lesser extent, by Congress than that due to a
valid legal actor of our system. Legal positivism, therefore, validates
the administrative state's illegitimacy with regards to environmen-
tal lawmaking.

Having demonstrated the illegitimacy of the current administra-
tive system, Part III takes up consideration of the appropriate rule
of recognition in our democratic system that, if followed, would
produce administrative legitimacy. It is often said that the Ameri-
can rule of recognition is the Constitution or some part of that
document.30 This assertion is rejected. Hart does not expressly re-
strict the rule of recognition (or rules, as some have argued31) to
the product of express agreement.32 Instead, Hart saw his rules of
recognition being derived from the general characteristics that
they shared, whether from the fact they were enacted by specific
bodies or as a result of their long customary practice in society.33
What matters most, however, is that laws, for Hart, are rules of be-
behavior that require subjects and officials to behave according to
certain socially determined standards.34

Accordingly, the rules of recognition in our system should be un-
derstood to include the democratic values that Americans accept
and regularly examine to determine both the validity of law and the
legitimacy of the lawmaking process.35 From this, it is theorized that

30. See, e.g., Kent Greenawalt, The Rule of Recognition and the Constitution, 85 MICH. L.
REV. 621 (1987); Kenneth Einar Himma, Understanding the Relationship Between the U.S.
Constitution and the Conventional Rule of Recognition, in The Rule of Recognition and the U.S.
Constitution, supra note 25, at 95; Carey, supra note 24. If the Constitution is the final
arbitrator of legitimacy in our system, then the problem is quite apparent—absent a consti-
tutional amendment, true legitimacy of the administrative state will remain unattainable.
31. See infra notes 58–64 and accompanying text.
32. HART, supra note 26, at 92.
33. Id.; see also Greenawalt, supra note 30, at 626 (“What counts for law depends ulti-
ately upon prevailing social practices, that is, what officials take as counting as law.”).
34. HART, supra note 26, at 107 (“[T]he rule of recognition exists only as a complex,
but normally concordant, practice of the courts, officials, and private persons in identifying
the law by reference to certain criteria.”); Carey, supra note 24, at 1108.
35. See infra Part II.B.
our oldest, and most cherished, democratic principle is the true "ultimate" rule of recognition—trustworthiness. Indeed, all other secondary rules of recognition in our system (including the Constitution) are designed to ensure sufficient checks and balances, primarily through well-defined engagement with other branches of government and the citizenry, to limit inevitable official self-interest and faction building.36

Finally, Part IV suggests and defends specific changes to agency procedure and practice to improve these agencies' trustworthiness as lawmaking bodies and, therefore, increase the democratic legitimacy to the environmental administrative apparatus. Part IV should not be read to suggest a singular, take it or leave it approach to EDD or administrative reform. Rather, the purpose is to suggest that EDD scholarship requires greater appreciation of legal positivism, and that reform proposals must be designed to appreciate the system's rules of recognition. Moreover, through a structural approach to reform the administrative state to better meet our democratic values, we will begin to not only better protect environmental values, but also restore the trust that we have lost for the American government due to its environmental regulatory inertia over the past two decades.

I. LEGAL POSITIVISM AND THE LEGITIMACY OF (ENVIRONMENTAL) ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

A. The Foundations of Modern Legal Positivism

"The existence of law is one thing; its merit or demerit is another. Whether it be or be not is one enquiry; whether it be or be not conformable to an assumed standard, is a different enquiry."37

In this quote rests the sole distinction between legal positivists like John Austin, Jeremy Bentham, and H.L.A. Hart, and the natural law views of those like St. Thomas Aquinas, Ronald Dworkin, and Kenneth Einar Himma. Law to a legal positivist is what is accepted as authoritative within a given legal system ("the existence of law"), and not necessarily what is just and right (its "merit or demerit").38 Policies that appear just, wise, efficient, or prudent—without more—cannot lay claim to the status of law any more that

36. See infra Part III.C.
38. See Green, supra note 24, at 1.
laws that are unjust, unwise, inefficient, or imprudent can be denied that status.  

For the legal positivist theorist, H.L.A. Hart, this distinction was clear, but left unresolved the question of what constitutes society's ultimate criteria for what counts as law. Hart rejected Austin's view that the commands of a sovereign constitute valid law when based solely on the sovereign's claim to power. In Hart's view, while some or even many might obey the commands of a dictator in fear of sanction, such a system of government "would not amount to a legal system." Hart went to great length to distinguish, therefore, the difference between being obliged to follow an order by force, and feeling one has an obligation (within the system) to do so as a citizen. In Hart's view, only the latter constitutes law.

From this premise flows Hart's theory of law as a union between primary and secondary rules. Under primary rules, "human beings are required to do or abstain from certain actions, whether they wish to or not." Primary rules exist in the form of statutes, ordinances, court orders, and regulations that apply to us everyday. The obligation to comply with primary rules flows not from the rules mere status as a "law," but from the primary rules' adoption in accordance with the system's "secondary rules." Simply put, secondary rules "provide that human beings may by doing or saying certain things introduce new rules of the primary type, extinguish or modify old ones, or in various ways determine their incidence or

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39. Id.
40. Carey, supra note 24, at 1165 ("Hart argued that law is a social fact and thus can be distinguished from morality."); id. at 1168 ("Hart . . . constructs a complex explanation of the nature of law without appealing to moral or normative explanations. Laws, for Hart, are rules of behavior that require subjects and officials to behave according to certain socially determined standards"); see also Robin Bradley Kar, Hart's Response to Exclusive Legal Positivism, 95 Geo. L.J. 395, 397 (2007) ("Hart used the internal point of view to develop what has come to be known as a 'social practice' account of rules and obligations, according to which these phenomena are reducible to social conventions animated by a particular psychology.").
41. Greenawalt, supra note 30, at 621.
42. Dyzenhaus, supra note 28, at 113–14.
43. Hart, supra note 26, at 20–25, 79–84. As Hart described it, in a gunman situation (A orders B, at gun point, to hand over his money), "we would say that B, if he obeyed, was 'obliged' to hand over his money. . . . There is a difference, [however], between the assertion that someone was obliged to do something and the assertion that he had an obligation to do it." Id. at 80.
44. Id. at 89 ("The statement that someone has or is under an obligation does indeed imply the existence of a rule; yet it is not always the case that where rules exist the standard of behaviour required by them is conceived of in terms of obligation. 'He ought to have' and 'He had an obligation to' are not always interchangeable expressions . . . .")
45. Id. at 77.
46. Id. at 78–79.
control their operations. Secondary rules establish the legal structure of a system, providing us the tools necessary to determine who is in power and how such authority may adopt or change the primary rules. Hart argues that the secondary rules are necessary in any well-defined legal system because even "[t]he most unconstrained sovereign will still need to have his commands recognized as such." Thus for Hart, sovereignty itself is constituted by law.

Secondary rules provide a cure to what Hart saw as a deficit in a simple social structure made up of only primary rules: uncertainty. Hart identified such uncertainty when a dispute arises over what the primary rules are or their precise scope. In a system made up of only primary rules, there would be no secondary authority to turn to for resolution. Hart believed this deficit to be ultimately fatal to any legal system, and, therefore, introduced us to a remedy: the rule of recognition. For reasons now to be discussed, the rule of recognition has the most bearing on the theories that this Article introduces.

B. H.L.A. Hart's Rule of Recognition

1. Background

The rule of recognition, to put it plainly, is the mechanism that enables citizens and officials within a given legal system to ascertain the primary rules of law. As one scholar has put it, the rule of recognition explains "why the prohibition on insider trading in section 16 of the Securities and Exchange Act of 1934 is a rule of law while the moral prohibition on being nasty to your elderly mother is not."
The rule is the embodiment of Hart's belief that there are two minimum conditions necessary for the existence of a legal system. First, those rules of behavior that are recognized as valid with reference to the system's ultimate criteria of validity must be generally obeyed; second, the system's criteria of legal validity must be effectively accepted as common public standards of official behavior by its officials. Thus, in Hart's view, a developed legal system has both a "behavioral element . . . and a cognitive element, where participants develop a critical, reflective attitude toward the norm and criticize deviations from that norm by others in the community."

Unfortunately, while Hart provided substantial inquiry into the nature of the rule, his own attempt to identify or conceptualize the form of the rule in any system was, at best, confused. Many scholars today assert that complex legal systems, like that of the United States, most likely have a hierarchical rule of recognition that is not a simple single rule, but consists of a bundle of rules each possibly directed at different officials or jurisdictions. Hart himself often referred to "rules of recognition" and to a system of "relative subordination and primacy." Yet, when read as a whole, Hart consistently argues that in such a system, "one [of the rules] is supreme;" an "ultimate" rule of recognition he suggests does exist. In his words:

We may say that a criterion of legal validity or source of law is supreme if rules identified by reference to it are still recognized as rules of the system, even if they conflict with rules identified by reference to the other criteria, whereas rules identified by reference to the latter are not so recognized if they conflict with the rules identified by reference to the supreme criterion.

55. See Hart, supra note 26, at 113.
56. Id.
57. Carey, supra note 24, at 1166 (emphasis omitted).
58. See, e.g., Greenawalt, supra note 30, at 630–31. The best he could offer was his view that "[i]n England they recognize as law . . . whatever the Queen in Parliament enacts." Hart, supra note 26, at 99; see also Greenawalt, supra note 30, at 630–31.
59. See Greenawalt, supra note 30, at 635, 659–60; Carey, supra note 24, at 1178–79, 1192–94.
60. E.g., Hart, supra note 26, at 92.
61. Id. at 102.
62. Id. (emphasis omitted).
63. Greenawalt, supra note 30, at 626 ("Hart . . . reserves the words 'rule of recognition' to refer to ultimate standards for identifying law; in his terminology, a standard that can be derived from another legal standard is not part of the rule of recognition.").
64. Hart, supra note 26, at 103.
One need not precisely identify the ultimate rule of recognition to test the validity of the modern administrative state in the United States. Instead, Hart specifies an approach to test the validity of both primary laws and primary lawmakers against even a known unknown, which we can suppose the rule of recognition is at this time. To construct such a test, it is first necessary to address two additional facets of Hart's work: Hart's internal point of view hypothesis and a presumed first and second order application of the rule of recognition.

2. The Internal Point of View Theory

Is it possible to demonstrate the existence of the rule(s) of recognition in a given system, or must it remain assumed? Clearly, in the day-to-day lives of those within a legal system who apply or follow the primary rules, the basis for why a particular rule has the weight of law is generally left unexamined beyond reference to its status as a statute, ordinance, regulation, judicial decision, etc. In this regard, an external viewer—a hypothetical person watching millions of interactions of citizens within a system—might begin to develop theories on how certain actions will necessitate predictable reactions. An outside observer will quickly understand that a robbery, for instance, will result in some form of punishment such as incarceration. But the external observer will not understand why incarceration is the socially mandated and acceptable punishment in the United States, while, for instance, equitable retribution (an eye for an eye) is not.

For Hart, however, statements of legal validity made by internal members of the system about particular primary rules—whether by judges, lawyers, or ordinary citizens—also carry with them certain presuppositions. What is left unstated is that the primary rule at issue is one accepted as an appropriate social norm within the system as ultimately measured, of course, by the rule of recognition. Hart argues that it is not essential that every individual citizen specifically recognize application of the rule to legitimize the legal

65. Identifying the rule of recognition is necessary, however, to evaluate proposed replacements or changes to the current administrative system. See infra Part III.
66. HART, supra note 26, at 105.
67. See id. ("[The presupposed matters] consist of two things. First, a person who seriously asserts the validity of some given rule of law, say a particular statute, himself makes use of a rule of recognition which he accepts as appropriate for identifying the law. Secondly, it is the case that this rule of recognition . . . is not only accepted by him but is the rule of recognition actually accepted and employed in the general operation of the system.").
system as such. Instead, what is important is that officials within the system regard these common standards or limitations on official behavior and appraise each other’s deviations as lapses. In other words, the presupposition that is the application of the rule of recognition is demonstrated every day by those internal officials within the system tasked with identifying what counts as law. The very acceptance of, or acquiescence in, primary rules by a majority of those officials demonstrates that they see those rules in line with the system’s rule(s) of recognition. This is Hart’s internal point of view theory.

3. First v. Second Order Application

As we have seen, through the rule of recognition Hart sought to provide resolution to “doubts and disagreements” that naturally arise within a system regarding which primary rules one is obligated to follow, and which may have moral appeal to some members in the group but are otherwise without legal force. According to Professor Scott Shapiro, in dwelling extensively on resolving doubt over primary rules within a system (what Shapiro has labeled “first-order” uncertainty), Hart overlooks another type of uncertainty—that which arises over the legitimacy of public officials to settle first-order uncertainty. As people within a system are bound to have different views regarding “the natures of justice, equality, liberty, privacy, security and the like,” there is certain to be disagreement over the proper form and function of government just as much as there will be difference of opinion over the meaning of primary rules. As Shapiro argues:

68. Id. at 112–13.
69. Id. at 113; see also Greenawalt, supra note 30, at 624 (“These tests or criteria need not be understood by the general populace; they are employed by officials.”).
70. See Hart, supra note 26, at 105, 113; see also Greenawalt, supra note 30, at 626 (“What counts as law depends ultimately upon prevailing social practices, that is, what officials take as counting as law.”).
71. See, e.g., Schauer, supra note 54, at 871. For Hart, an external observer of a system could, on the basis of recording regular responses to conformity and non-conformity with the rules, predict with a fair measure of success that deviation from the rules corresponds with a hostile reaction (reactions, reproofs, punishment, etc.). Hart, supra note 26, at 87. The external point of view, however, cannot reproduce the way in which the rules function as rules in the lives of those in the system. “For them the violation of a rule is not merely a basis for the prediction that a hostile reaction will follow but a reason for hostility.” Id. at 88.
72. See, e.g., Shapiro, supra note 25, at 250–52.
73. Id. at 250–51.
74. Id. at 251.
75. Id.
Recognizing the prevalence of second-order as well as first-order uncertainty is imperative, for the resolution of the latter cannot be had without the resolution of the former. In other words, public officials can resolve the doubts of, and disagreements between, private parties only if members of the group are not uncertain about the identity of the public officials.  

Herein lies what appears to be one of the many missing pieces of Hart's puzzle: it is imperative that a legal system have a means to test not only the validity of its primary rules, but also the validity of its primary rule givers. As Shapiro appreciates, an efficient legal system cannot resort to member deliberation, negotiation, or bargaining over every second-order uncertainty dispute, nor can it require its members to simply guess over proper distribution of power.  

Therefore, in the interest of efficiency, as with first-order disputes, uncertainty over the "content and contours of official dut[ies]" must necessarily be resolved through appeal to the secondary rules, and, in particular one must believe, the rule of recognition.

II. TESTING FIDELITY TO THE RULE OF RECOGNITION: A LEGAL POSITIVIST ACCOUNT FOR THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

A. Official Acceptance Within the U.S. Legal System: The Role of Comity

Our tripartite national government "is premised on each institution's respect for and knowledge of the others and on a continuing dialogue that produces shared understanding and comity."  

Comity, of course, is necessary to preserve a workable government and, thus, can be said to have a functional justification. But comity also has a philosophical justification to the extent that, as Hart suggests, through respectful engagement both branches are legitimized as

76. Id.
77. Id. at 252.
78. Id.
79. Robert A. Katzmann, Courts and Congress 1 (1997)(emphasis added); see also City of Boerne v. Flores, 521 U.S. 507, 535–36 (1997) (noting that our collective national experience reinforces that our legal system "is preserved best when each part of Government respects both the Constitution and the proper actions and determinations of the other branches").
valid lawgivers. Thus, when the Supreme Court upholds an act of Congress, or demonstrates its reluctance to overrule legislative action even in the face of apparent constitutional defects, the Court's actions speak equally to the validity of the primary rule as to Congress' legitimacy within the system. Similarly, when the Court overrules a popular act of Congress and faces resounding criticism for the substance of its decision, the respect given by a majority of the Congress, as well as the President, to the Court by implementing its opinion fortifies certainty as to the status of each of the branches. In short, comity is the mechanism through which Hart's internal point of view theory is utilized daily in the United States by officials to resolve both first- and second-order uncertainty.

Comity among the branches demonstrates the legitimacy of primary rules and legal actors in our system. However, what does it mean when there is a lack of comity between branches, or more precisely, a lack of agreement among a majority of officials within the branches over the proper exercise or scope of power? In such circumstances, legitimate authority may still appear to exist, but it is more often than not controversial and/or contested. For a legal positivist, the failure of a majority of public officials within the system to accept authority by a legal actor leads to the conclusion that such power is not only disputed, but it does not meet the social criteria we are calling the rule of recognition as well. For example, for over a century now the existence and parameters of presidential

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81. See Winkler, supra note 80, at 1948-49.

82. The Supreme Court's decision in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, 130 S. Ct. 876 (2010), comes to mind in which the Court faced extreme criticism of its decision to overturn portions of the McCain-Feingold Act that prohibited corporations and unions from using their general treasury funds to make independent expenditures for speech defined as an "electioneering communication" or for speech expressly advocating the election or defeat of a candidate. See Adam Liptak, Justices, 5-4, Reject Corporate Campaign Spending Limit, N.Y. Times, Jan. 22, 2010, at Al. Of course, Congress can always seek to overrule Supreme Court decisions invalidating legislation through subsequent, valid legislative action. See, e.g., David T. Buente, Citizen Suits and the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990: Closing the Enforcement Loop, 21 Env'tal. L. 2233, 2238 (1991).
authority (as opposed to judicial authority) to refuse to implement constitutionally suspect statues has been "hotly contested," and a seemingly fair number of officials refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the President doing so. In the same way, large numbers of officials challenge the so-called unitary executive theory, which purports to give the President direct authority over all administrative agency decision-making processes, as a legitimate description of executive power. In both cases, the presence of disputed second-order authority invalidates the president's action under the internal point of view hypothesis.

B. A Demonstrated Lack of Comity for Environmental Administrative Apparatus

History shows that actions by each of the three constitutional branches of government confirm a deficient respect of the environmental regulatory apparatus by other officials. Based on Hart's theories, this calls into jeopardy the authority of environmental regulators to issue primary rules to protect public health and welfare.

1. The Courts' Hostile Treatment of Environmental Agency Decisions

In theory, the scope of judicial review of environmental regulatory action is considered narrow—a court is to show tremendous deference to the agency, whether in interpreting its legal mandate under the *Chevron* doctrine or in reviewing an agency's policy-related determinations during rulemaking under the APA's "arbi-

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84. See, e.g., Peter M. Shane, *Legislative Delegation, the Unitary Executive, and the Legitimacy of the Administrative State*, 33 Harv. J.L. & Pub. Pol'y 103, 109 (2010) (noting that the unitary executive theory, also called presidentialism, "is the idea that the President has a wide range of powers virtually exempt from congressional regulation or judicial review, including the power of command over all discretionary policymaking of other executive officers").

85. Id. at 103–06.


trary and capricious review standard. In reality, agencies face rigorous, probing review by the courts far beyond that given to either legislative or executive action under the Constitution. Judge Wald, for example, described the hard look "arbitrary and capricious" standard of review as a “catch-all label for attacks on the agency’s rationale, its completeness or logic, . . . or lack of evidence in the record to support key findings” of law. Likewise, some scholars have suggested that judicial review has become so intrusive that agencies ultimately stop trying to pursue their regulatory missions through rulemaking and/or dwell so extensively on excessive data gathering and analysis that the costs and delays of regulatory programs become unbearable. These type of views about the relationship between agencies and the courts produces an image of semi-hostility, not comity, in the mind.

The Supreme Court’s recent opinion in Massachusetts v. EPA reveals the insolence the Court can show to agencies and their decisions, even under the most deferential of standards. The case involved a challenge to EPA’s denial of a rulemaking petition requesting that the agency regulate greenhouse gas emissions from

90. Compare F. Andrew Hessick, Rethinking the Presumption of Constitutionality, 85 NOTRE DAME L. REV. 1447, 1447 (2010) (noting that in Federalist No. 78 “Alexander Hamilton stated that the courts should overturn only those [statutory] laws that were ‘contrary to the manifest tenor of the Constitution’” and that the Supreme Court has repeatedly maintained that the judiciary may invalidate statutes “only upon a plain showing that Congress has exceeded its constitutional bounds”), with Young, supra note 89, at 210 (arguing that the Supreme Court has “legitimated and perhaps intensified a trend toward increased judicial scrutiny of agency action, particularly informal agency action, under the arbitrary and capricious standard”). Indeed, it is generally accepted “that ‘arbitrary and capricious’ review . . . is a far cry from the lenient scrutiny intended by Congress when it enacted the APA.” Gillian E. Metzger, Ordinary Administrative Law as Constitutional Law, 110 COLUM. L. REV. 479, 491 (2010); see also Citizens to Preserve Overton Park v. Volpe, 401 U.S. 402, 415 (1971) (“[A]n agency’s decision is entitled to a presumption of regularity. But that presumption is not to shield his action from a thorough, probing, in-depth review.”).
92. William S. Jordan, III, Ossification Revisited: Does Arbitrary and Capricious Review Significantly Interfere with Agency Ability to Achieve Regulatory Goals Through Informal Rulemaking?, 94 NW. U. L. REV. 393, 394–95 (2000). While there is no good data regarding the number of agency decisions set aside by courts over the past fifty years, limited sampling by Judge Wald, formerly of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, suggests that the number may be as high as 47%. Patricia M. Wald, Regulation at Risk: Are Courts Part of the Solution or Most of the Problem?, 67 S. CAL. L. REV. 621, 636–37 (1994).
new motor vehicles under the Clean Air Act. EPA denied the petition on the grounds that the agency lacked statutory authority, and in any event it would be unwise to do so absent a more comprehensive national and multi-national approach to climate change. Indeed, EPA went so far as to suggest that the President’s foreign policy powers would trump any Clean Air Act mandate. A majority of the Court flatly rejected all of EPA’s arguments.

It is not surprising that, given the broad definition of an “air pollutant” in the Clean Air Act and the rather expansive mandate to regulate air pollution from new automobiles in Section 202 of the Act, the Court rejected EPA’s assertion that it lacked statutory authority. What is most “stunning,” in the words of Professor Ronald Cass, “is the seemingly effortless leap from [the Court’s] decision on authority to a conclusion that, because EPA may regulate, it must and must do so now.” Professor Cass argues that “the Justices stretch, twist, and torture administrative law doctrines to avoid the inconvenient truth that this is not a matter in which judges have any real role to play.” He goes on:

The majority opinion in Mass. v. EPA reads like a faculty discussion paper or political position paper, intended for only a like-minded crowd. There is no sense of real openness to the EPA’s analysis—questioning the clarity of global warming science or the immediate need to do anything and everything possible to combat it (even at the risk of impairing efforts at a

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95. Id. at 536–37.
97. 42 U.S.C. § 7602(g) (2006) (“The term ‘air pollutant’ means any air pollution agent or combination of such agents, including any physical, chemical, biological, radioactive (including source material, special nuclear material, and byproduct material) substance or matter which is emitted into or otherwise enters the ambient air.”).
98. Id. § 7521(a)(1) ("The Administrator shall by regulation prescribe (and from time to time revise) in accordance with the provisions of this section, standards applicable to the emission of any air pollutant from any class or classes of new motor vehicles or new motor vehicle engines, which in his judgment cause, or contribute to, air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare.").
101. Id.
better solution) is received by the majority as an obvious departure from common sense.\footnote{102}

Of course, from a legal positivist perspective, the opinion demonstrates that, despite the generalized tone of deference afforded in administrative jurisprudence for over sixty years, a major- majority of officials on the Supreme Court lack trust in the EPA to make the legal decisions assigned to the agency by Congress. And this is not merely unique to this one case. As Professor Robert Percival points out, despite a seventy-five year relationship between the Court and administrative agencies, the \textit{Massachusetts v. EPA} opinion demonstrates that the tension between skepticism over the regulatory state and tolerance for it, so prevalent during the New Deal, has failed to diminish in the Court’s mind.\footnote{103} More importantly, the lack of demonstrated comity suggests that the environmental administrative state lacks the requisite legitimacy to be fully trusted by the Court to accomplish its protective mandates.

2. The Executive’s Misuse of the Environmental Regulatory Apparatus

The Court’s view of EPA (and other agencies) may be the consequence of the Executive Branch’s escalating manipulation of the administrative decision-making process, in which politicians, rather than scientific or technical experts, make the relevant calculations.\footnote{104}
Returning to the essential question in \textit{Massachusetts v. EPA}, when asked to consider whether the government’s climate change science may have been manipulated, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee concluded that indeed “the risks posed by climate change were deliberately understated [by EPA] through the editing of scientific reports by non-scientists in the White House.”\footnote{105} Such audacious interference with the independence of any agency,
and disregard for the very nature and purpose of the administrative state, similarly demonstrates that officials of the Executive Branch likewise lack the respect needed to establish this so-called fourth branch of government with the necessary legitimacy to function in our system.

3. Congress' Distrust and Misuse of Environmental Regulation

Administrative law scholars often comment on an air of distrust and skepticism by Congress with regards to bureaucratic lawmaking. The relationship between Congress and congressionally created regulatory agencies is characterized through intense and pervasive oversight, which, in the case of EPA, for instance, appears to be consistently adversarial and negative. Of course, an antagonistic relationship between governmental bodies is not necessarily problematic, and is considered by some the intent of the Founders of our constitutional system. Yet, there is also evidence that Congress's distrust runs deeper—that it indicates a lack of acceptance of agency legitimacy.

Take for instance the apparent trend of drafting tighter enabling statutes to leave little if any room for agency interpretation. By intentionally limiting the range of agency discretion in making policy decisions, Congress, like the other branches, evinces that legislative officials have little respect for, or trust in, the agency's ability to perform the functions envisioned by the New Deal creators of the modern administrative state, at least in the

106. See Laura J. Kerrigan, et al., Project: The Decriminalization of Administrative Law Penalties—Civil Remedies, Alternatives, Policy, and Constitutional Implications, 45 ADMIN. L. REV. 367, 397 (1993) (noting that "Congress has tended to draft very specific statutes.... [T]his is most likely the result of a distrust of the administrative agencies serving as policymaker."); Jessica Owley, Piney Run: The Permits Are Not What They Seem, 30 ECOLOGY L.Q. 429, 440 n. 88 (2003); Mathew D. Zinn, Policing Environmental Regulatory Enforcement: Cooperation, Capture, and Citizen Suits, 21 STAN. ENVTL. L.J. 81, 83-84 (2002) (noting that the environmental statutes' "anti-capture measures," such as citizen-suit provisions, emerged because of Congress's "grave distrust" of regulatory agencies).


108. Lazarus, supra note 107, at 206.


independent, professional, and technocratic manner once perceived. Conversely, Congress has also been known to take advantage of the public distrust of the regulatory apparatus, such as by intentionally punting to an agency "really tough policy choices" and by misbranding policy issues as capable of being resolved largely by agency scientific expertise. In these instances, Congress' misuse of the agency as a means to avoid their own political accountability on an issue also suggests that these officials have little interest in ensuring a legitimate, properly functioning administrative state.

III. EDD AND AMERICAN VALUES: DOES IT SATISFY THE RULE OF RECOGNITION?

A. The Promise of Environmental Deliberative Democracy

Today, most scholars accept that our nation's environmental story has become a story of Congressional inaction and regulatory backsliding. As Professor John Dryzek has put it, "[i]f two or more decades of political ecology yield any single conclusion, it is surely that authoritarian and centralized means for the resolution of ecological problems have been discredited rather decisively." The problem most often cited is straightforward—the incomplete representation of environmental interests [by the decision-making institution], allied with the lack of environmental accountability of [the] current state-centered political system[]. Thus, the limited

111. See Sunstein, supra note 1.
115. See Klein, supra note 104, at 659–73.
116. John S. Dryzek, Strategies of Ecological Democratization, in Democracy and the Environment: Problems and Prospects 108, 108 (William M. Lafferty & James Meadowcroft eds., 1996). At the root of this system, which has been labeled eco-authoritarianism, is the belief that "a strong and cohesive leadership is indispensable for identifying the right solutions to the environmental crisis as such and ensuring that they are implemented effectively to the society at large, which is only available in an authoritarian but not a democratic regime." Wong, supra note 18, at 4.
117. MICHAEL MASON, ENVIRONMENTAL DEMOCRACY 47 (1999); see also GRAHAM SMITH, DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY AND THE ENVIRONMENT 53 (2003) ("Contemporary liberal democratic institutions are charged with lacking sensitivity to the plurality of values we associate with the non-human world, and with employing techniques to guide decision making... that misrepresent and distort the nature of environmental values.").
response to environmental concerns by government is considered "a reflection of a . . . decision-making process most receptive to economic self-interest and powerful sectoral interest groups." With regard to the administrative state, agency environmental decisions are often viewed not only with dissatisfaction, but as the mere product of an opaque process, with limited public participation and with no genuine accountability to democratic authority.

Despite this realization about our environmental condition, optimistic new literature is emerging that seeks to examine and improve upon the relationship between environmentalism and democracy. Chief among this literature is the concept of Environmental Deliberative Democracy (EDD), which is most basically defined as "a decision-making procedure which emphasizes the processes of free and fair deliberation among individuals where their preferences and value orientations are debated with a focus of the need to realize the common good." EDD shares with other liberal theories the desire to create political institutions that will resolve conflict, but also acknowledges that in the "process of engagement individuals' preferences and value orientations can be transformed." Thus, the primary distinction between EDD and our existing system is the addition of a deliberative process—a defined platform, if you will, for citizens and stakeholders "to call to mind, raise, discuss and take care of . . . interests other than their own"—before the rendering of any decision. According to environmental deliberative democrats, individuals are inclined to make more ethical or reasonable judgments when given the opportunity in a public sphere to reflect about the whole environment as a common good. This is particularly true when the public forum allows others to challenge their potentially narrow, self-interested viewpoints.

EDD advocates also reject the currently constituted administrative state as a viable means to develop environmental policy. In particular, "the rationality gained through 'specialized and competent fulfillment' of social tasks by expert [agencies has provided]

118. Mason, supra note 117, at 48; see also Baber & Bartlett, supra note 16, at 3 ("The environmental protection achievements of four decades have given rise . . . to a widespread environmental complacency and to entrenched and even more sophisticated green opposition from political and economic interests.").
119. See Markell, supra note 5, at 653.
120. See, e.g., Baber & Bartlett, supra note 16, at 1–2; Mason, supra note 117, at 2.
121. Wong, supra note 18, at 8 (citation omitted).
122. Smith, supra note 117, at 56.
123. Wong, supra note 18, at 8 (citation omitted).
124. Id. at 8–9; see also Mathew Humphrey, Ecological Politics and Democratic Theory 95 (2007).
no protection against the paternalism and ‘self-empowerment’ of the administrative agencies” charged with caring for the environment. According to Professors Baber and Bartlett, improved environmental regulation requires

more focused production of information about environmental challenges . . . that is broadly known, regularly reviewed, and used as the basis for strategy development, tactics formation, and resource allocation by agencies charged with environmental protection. And it goes without saying that this process of information generation and deployment must involve frequent and meaningful opportunities for deliberative input from as many interested citizens as can be accommodated.

These concerns over the administrative state resonate loudly in the United States, where administrative decision-making dominates the day-to-day environmental policy agenda. Accordingly, American law scholars have, in recent years, produced a mounting collection of administrative law reform proposals. While many of these proposals do not specifically align their writing with the EDD movement, their ideas certainly overlap. As a general proposition, the scholars, like other administrative law theorists, accept that the administrative state is here to stay and that a constitutional amendment to legitimize the branch is highly unlikely. Accordingly, they look to statutorily mandated changes to agency procedure to better check agency authority and politicization.

The American literature can roughly be grouped into three classifications, each increasingly more specific with regard to the role of the public in the agency deliberation process. At the lowest level are those suggestions grounded in the civic republicanism tradition. These scholars often call for changes to the agency’s

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126. Id. (citation omitted).
127. See generally Croley, supra note 7, at 3 (noting that “[administrative agency] decisions dwarf those of the other three branches, certainly by volume and quite possibly by importance as well”).
128. See David Fontana, Reforming the Administrative Procedure Act: Democracy Index Rulemaking, 74 Fordham L. Rev. 81, 100 n.118 (2005).
129. Modern civic republicans view the Constitution as an attempt to ensure that lawmaking results from deliberation that respects, and reflects, the values of all members of society. Seidenfeld, supra note 1, at 1514. Two leading proponents of this theory, Cass Sunstein and Frank Michelman, argue that increased public participation and increased deliberation by Congress is the essential means to fulfilling the civic republican promise. See, e.g., Lisa O. Monaco, Comment, Give the People What They Want: The Failure of “Responsive” Lawmaking, 3 U. Chi. L. Sch. Roundtable 735, 757 (1996). While “Sunstein adheres to the
information gathering process to allow for public input at earlier stages of the policy formation (in hopes of broadening both the agency perspective and range of possible regulatory alternatives). Similar calls for reform are made regarding the scope of judicial review, giving the court authority to remand decisions with orders to the agency to act in "a more deliberative manner" when issuing rules. At the intermediate level are those who desire greater direct public participation in the decision-making process, generally in the form of citizen advisory panels or citizen-based mediations. At the highest, most stringent level are those who call for giving citizens direct substantive authority over agency decision-making, possibly in the form of a citizen jury.

Regardless of the classification, for a legal positivist, the primary rules we desire to put in place to check agency authority must first adhere to our system's underlying rules of recognition if there is any chance of official acceptance of administrative lawmaking. Thus, before scrutinizing whether EDD can legitimize the environmental administrative apparatus, we are first duty-bound to identify the applicable rule of recognition in our system to judge the legitimacy of these bureaucratic lawmakers. Otherwise, it will remain unclear, and certainly untested, that EDD proposals stand...

130. Seidenfeld, supra note 1, at 1514–15.
131. Id. at 1549.
132. See, e.g., John S. Applegate, Beyond the Usual Suspects: The Use of Citizens Advisory Boards in Environmental Decisionmaking, 73 IND. L.J. 903, 921–26 (1998); Fontana, supra note 128, at 88–89 (2005); Nou, supra note 18, at 606 (arguing for "deliberative cost-benefit analysis" in which "[d]eliberative forums . . . of lay citizens . . . engage in informed and structured discussion" with regards to their individual preferences, which then informs agency rulemaking).
133. See, e.g., Applegate, supra note 132, at 914–20; Fontana, supra note 128, at 82–83.
any better chance at justifying the modern administrative state than the numerous other offers made by theorists over the decades.

**B. The Rule of Recognition in the United States**

*(Second-Order Uncertainty)*

Legal philosophers often argue that the ultimate rule of recognition in the United States is the Constitution itself or some distinct part of the Constitution. Take the proposition, for instance, that

the rule of recognition for federal law in the U.S. would be:

The text of the 1787 Constitution (including the amending clause), and whatever is validated as law by that text (including both amendments to the original text and subordinate law, e.g., statutes enacted pursuant to Article I or judicial directives issued pursuant to Article III), is law.

This may be an acceptable statement to resolve first-order uncertainty, but when it comes to resolving the type of second-order uncertainty questions that arise in the context of legitimacy of the administrative state, the constitutional account of the rule of recognition in the United States fails on two fronts. First, that the ultimate rule of recognition must (or can) be embodied in an express, written agreement like the Constitution misconstrues Hart's own criteria; and second, such a notion does not comport with real-world practice.

As suggested earlier, according to Hart, "every legal system necessarily contains one, and only one, rule that sets out the [final] test of validity for that system." The key, therefore, is in locating "the master rule that exists by virtue of the fact of social acceptance

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135. Indeed, for nearly sixty years economists, political scientists, and legal scholars have advanced theoretical proposals to legitimize the post-New Deal administrative state. See, e.g., Croley, supra note 7, at 5-6. Or as Professor Jody Freedman explains it, "administrative law scholarship has organized itself largely around the need to defend the administrative state against accusations of illegitimacy." Jody Freeman, *The Private Role in Public Governance*, 75 N.Y.U. L. Rev. 543, 546 (2000).

136. E.g., Greenawalt, supra note 30, at 642; Frank I. Michelman, *Constitutional Authorship By The People*, 74 Notre Dame L. Rev. 1605, 1614 (1999); Carey, supra note 24, at 1178-79.


138. Shapiro, supra note 25, at 238; see also supra notes 62-64 and accompanying text.
and not on the account of any further rule of recognition." Inversely, a norm that can be derived from reference to another norm is not, by definition, an ultimate rule. In the American system, however, reaching beyond the text of the Constitution to some sort of higher authority is a well-entrenched practice by presidents, legislators, jurists, and lawyers tasked with judging the validity of primary rules and official acts. Thus, in considering the proper interpretation of the Constitution's separation of powers provisions, or its meaning with regards to an issue involving the balance of federal and state authority, it comes of no surprise to find a legislator, president, or jurist calling on the words of the Founders, or past officials, for guidance. In doing so, what the officials are looking for is a set of social facts—namely the shared norms, customs, or values that underlie our collective understanding of what constitutes the American democratic system—for validation that their interpretation of the Constitution is the correct one.

The Constitution, which contains a majority of rules of recognition used on a day-to-day basis, is often a convenient proxy for judging the validity of the nation's primary rules and legal institutions. However, those social facts that Hart would call the rules of recognition are not only capable of existing outside of a rigid constitution, but must if a legal system's understanding of what constitutes valid law is to evolve over time. In this regard, where the text of the Constitution cannot provide clear resolution when a question of uncertainty arises, officials should first look to "present consensus," which, if it exists, "should be seen as a sufficient condition for determining the ultimate criteria of legal validity." If present consensus does not exist, however, then the proper way to resolve the dispute is by "focusing on the reasons that the system's constitutional designers had for adopting its basic institutional arrangements" in 1787. Rules, and most certainly the ultimate rule, are capable of existing outside the Constitution as part of a com-

139. Schauer, supra note 54, at 870 (footnotes omitted) (emphasis added).
140. Hart, supra note 26, at 102-03.
141. As Justice Scalia has acknowledged, the Founders' views, as contained in the Federalist Papers and other writings, are, for instance, valuable in implementing the Constitution because "their writings, like those of other intelligent and informed people of the time, display how the text of the Constitution was originally understood." Antonin Scalia, A Matter of Interpretation 38 (Amy Gutmann ed., 1997).
142. Shapiro, supra note 25, at 261.
143. Id. As Professor Shapiro sees it, "that a group of constitutional designers shared a certain ideology regarding goals, values, and/or trust is a social fact." Id. at 266. However, by privileging current consensus over historical social practice, Hart's theories of legal positivism are not consistent with originalism, which should focus only on the Founders' thoughts regarding the Constitution. See, e.g., Larry Kramer, Two (More) Problems with Originalism, 31 Harv. J.L. & Pub. Pol'y 907, 907 (2008).
mon understanding of the societal values of what constitutes a democratic lawmaking institution, or a democratically enacted primary rule, in our system.

Interestingly, it is moralist legal philosophers that seem to agree that one need not turn solely to the Constitution to resolve legal uncertainty arising in our system. As Professor Suzanna Sherry proposed over twenty years ago, there is a strong historical record to demonstrate that the Founders themselves never intended "their new Constitution to be the sole source of paramount or higher law." Instead, the Founders also recognized a "mixture of custom, natural law, religious law, enacted law, and reason," which Sherry labels part of fundamental law, which would continue to exist and might serve to invalidate legislative action, even in light of no apparent constitutional defect. Through meticulous historical research, Sherry demonstrates that this unwritten fundamental law, universally accepted in both England and the colonies, was often of chief importance to the Founders during debates over the Constitution, was recognized by the first Congress, and continued to play a role in judicial review of legislation after the Constitution was ratified. She argues, however, that modern constitutional law has all but eradicated this link between the Constitution and fundamental law.

Ironically, Sherry blames the loss of our understanding of fundamental law on "the legacy of legal positivism." In some respect, this is true given the focus on the Constitution as the ultimate rule. Her argument, however, as well as those focusing on the Constitution, misconstrues Hart's understanding of the rule of recognition. Hart specifically believed that in a developed legal system, the rules could not be identified "exclusively by reference to a text or list," but instead "by reference to some general characteristic possessed by the primary rules." In this regard, removing references to natural and religious law, Sherry's description of fundamental law is not so different than what is argued above to be Hart's understanding of the rule of recognition as a social norm, of a shared

145. Id. at 1129.
146. Id. at 1128, 1167–68.
147. Id. at 1128–34.
148. Id. at 1157–61.
149. Id. at 1161–67.
150. Id. at 1167–76.
151. Id. at 1176.
152. Id.
153. HART, supra note 26, at 92.
understanding of what is law based upon the existence of social facts accepted by those within the system.154

Perhaps, however, if unconvinced by theory alone that the Constitution must fail as the ultimate rule of recognition, consideration of the very condition of the modern administrative state today can better prove the argument. The administrative state, though strongly supported by constitutional structures, lacks the hallmarks of comity required for legitimacy. Clearly, there is no disagreement that both Congress, under its Article I authority, and the Supreme Court, under Article III, have repeatedly sought to legitimate administrative authority. Congress has not only passed legislation establishing specific administrative departments, it has on occasions too numerous to count, acted to provide agencies the power to carry out specific regulatory missions. Most telling of all, Congress has acted through valid legislation—namely the Administrative Procedure Act155—to provide an overarching framework for the administrative state to operate within.156 Likewise, the Supreme Court has regularly imprinted a constitutional seal of approval on the administrative state by upholding congressional delegations.157 The endorsement of the administrative state by two branches of government, through constitutional action for that matter, should seemingly, according to the rule of recognition pronounced above, legitimize both the agencies as lawgivers and regulations as primary rules. Clearly, however, it has not, and, therefore, it can scarcely be argued further that the Constitution is the ultimate rule of recognition in this country.158

So what is a better candidate for the ultimate rule? The answer is “trustworthiness.” Trustworthiness is the one value shared among the Founders, as well as citizens and officials today, that time and time again stands out as the foremost basis for the structure of the

154. Id.; Shapiro, supra note 25, at 261.
156. Remarkably, Professor Shapiro has argued that the APA, although not part of the Constitution, confers such rulemaking power to agencies that it should also be understood as partially constituting the rule of recognition in the United States. Shapiro, supra note 25, at 256.
158. The notion that the administrative state is a legitimate source of primary rules would eviscerate Hart’s basic understanding of the rule of recognition (that the rules make the sovereign) and return us to the historical positivism approach of John Austin and Jeremy Bentham (the sovereign makes the rules). See Shapiro, supra note 25, at 235. As Professor Michelman observed, “[w]hatever you want to call it, [the ultimate rule] cannot itself consist in the command of any lawgiver because it supplies the standard by which claims to the status of lawgiver are verified (or not).” Michelman, supra note 136, at 1613.
American legal system. Our government exists as a result of a social agreement in which all "decline to trust the goodness of the rulers to protect the rights of citizens."159 Again, as Professor Shapiro explains it: "[T]he interpretive methodology that best furthers the designers' shared goals, values, and judgments of trustworthiness is the proper one for interpreting the authoritative texts and hence for revealing the content of the system's shared plan."160

That it can be said that "[o]ur entire government is based on distrust of official power" is not, of course, expressly evident in the text of the Constitution.161 That term is not used anywhere in the document. The Constitution is simply a framework document, laying out a government based on a system of checks and balances to address the Founders' underlying distrust of officials.162 The Framers, of course, would feel no need to specifically set forth such values in a framework document. As they had already clearly indicated, the right of every person to address their grievances over abuse of official power is a "self-evident" social fact that existed, and continues to exist, in our system.163

C. Reconciliation: EDD and the Rule of Recognition

Part III.B. proposes that the ultimate rule within our system to judge legitimacy of a lawmaking institution such as the administrative state is measured by the trustworthiness of the institution. Accordingly, until structural measures are put into place to bestow credibility on the environmental administrative apparatus, then no matter how deep their historical roots, and no matter how useful the bureaucracy is to society, public attitude will continue to focus on how the government power bestowed to administrative agencies "is being held and exercised in accordance with [the] nation's laws, values, traditions, and customs."164 Such measures need not be

160. Shapiro, supra note 25, at 261 (emphasis added).
161. Travis Christopher Barham, Note, Congress Gave and Congress Hath Taken Away: Jurisdiction Withdraw and the Constitution, 62 WASH. & LEE L. REV. 1139, 1215 (2005); see also Willard Hurst, Discussion, in SUPREME COURT AND SUPREME LAW 75 (Edmond N. Cahn ed., 1954) ("A very basic principal of our constitutionalism [is] a distrust of official power.").
162. Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer, 343 U.S. 579, 593 (1952) (Frankfurter, J., concurring) ("To that end [the Founders] rested the structure of our central government on the system of checks and balances. For them the doctrine of separation of powers was not mere theory; it was a felt necessity."); see also Sherry, supra note 144, at 1130 ("A constitution was simply the norms by which people were constituted into a nation.").
163. THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE para. 2 (U.S. 1776).
164. See Freedman, supra note 8, at 10.
implemented by a constitutional amendment—it is enough that the structural form of the institution satisfies the ultimate rule.\(^{165}\) Indeed, past practice demonstrates this to be true. Before the New Deal, agencies were widely used, but the sense of illegitimacy that surrounds them now was virtually non-existent. One reason might be that the delegations in pre-New Deal times were far more limited,\(^{166}\) generally involving ratemaking and other specific adjudications. More importantly, however, the function and procedures of these early agencies took better account of fundamental fairness and due process concerns so as to check arbitrary agency power.\(^{167}\) Unfortunately, while the New Deal enlarged the scope of agency delegation and expanded the function of the administrative state, the procedural checks on agency trustworthiness have not kept pace, notwithstanding the adoption of the Administrative Procedure Act in 1946.

EDD, correctly, suggests that additional democratic procedures are required to restore legitimacy, at least with regards to environmental administrative law. Social psychologists, in fact, tell us that that the extent to which a process is seen as “procedurally just” is extremely important to judgments about the legitimacy of an action.\(^{168}\) It should be becoming clear, however, that in order to be successful in this endeavor, EDD theorists too are obligated to test their principles against the rules of recognition. The proposals must, of course, be designed with the ultimate rule of recognition

\(^{165}\) See David H. Rosenbloom, Retrofitting the Administrative State to the Constitution: Congress and the Judiciary’s Twentieth-Century Progress, 60 PUB. ADMIN. REV. 39, 43–44 (2000) (arguing that the focus of the courts and Congress since adoption of the APA in 1946 has been to make administrative procedures “more closely reflect democratic-constitutional norms for legislating and governing”).

\(^{166}\) See Field v. Clark, 143 U.S. 649, 692–93 (1892) (finding that the delegation in question was limited to discretion on the facts, not as to the law); Wayman v. Southard, 23 U.S. (10 Wheat.) 1, 43 (1825) (distinguishing “those important subjects, which must be entirely regulated by the legislature itself, from those of less interest, in which a general provision may be made, and power given to [agencies] to act under such general provisions to fill up the details”).

\(^{167}\) Before adoption of the APA, agency rulemaking typically followed trial-type adjudicatory processes. Richard E. Levy & Sidney A. Shapiro, Administrative Procedure and the Decline of the Trial, 51 KAN. L. REV. 473, 485 (2003). These trial procedures, while more onerous on the administrative agency, provide greater process and fairness to the regulated party. See Marshall J. Breger, The APA: An Administrative Conference Perspective, 72 VA. L. REV. 337, 347 (1986) (“Formal rulemaking, whatever its conceptual virtue in ensuring due process, has failed in practice because it emphasizes trial-type procedures that are not suited for exploration of the general characteristics of an industry.”); Levy & Shapiro, supra, at 485. Although the APA did contemplate that rulemaking procedures might remain formal, “[t]he United States Supreme Court facilitated the avoidance of formal rulemaking procedures through a series of decisions that made clear that formal rulemaking procedures are seldom required by due process, the APA, or an agency’s organic statute.” Id. at 485–87.

\(^{168}\) Markell, supra note 5, at 677.
in mind (i.e., to instill trustworthiness into the system); but observance of all possible rules of recognition is also required. With this in mind, we can now turn to consideration of substantive EDD suggestions to legitimize the environmental administrative apparatus and, more importantly, improve the quality of environmental decision-making within these agencies.

IV. EDD: A LEGAL POSITIVIST PROPOSAL

A. Toward a Deliberative, Democratic, and Trustworthy American Environmental Administrative State

There is no single prescription for reforming the environmental administrative state. From a legal positivist position, however, some proposals might have greater promise, some less, and some might even further undermine the legitimacy of the administrative state. For instance, returning to the earlier discussion of three classifications of EDD literature, it would seem that the highest level of EDD—giving citizens direct control over substantive agency authority—is itself conspicuously contrary to our accepted democratic values, which have long rejected that measure of citizen participation in government. On the other hand, some level of citizen participation in government short of directly controlling official decision-making is considered "sacrosanct to modern democracy." Public awareness and involvement in agency decision-making eliminates regulatory "slack" and generates decisions that are more accountable and transparent to the public. Thus, public

169. See supra notes 129–134 and accompanying text.
170. See Monaco, supra note 129, at 739–40 (explaining that the Founders believed the country could only be governed through representation and that direct control by citizens would result in "the instability of successive majorities"); Rossi, supra note 129, at 192 (describing the Founders' distinction between a "republic" and a "pure democracy").
171. Rossi, supra note 129, at 180–81.
172. As Professor Michael Levine explains it:

"Slack" is the effect of information and monitoring costs that shield the actions of a regulator from observation by a rational electorate. The operation of the economic theory of regulation implicitly relies on the existence of slack. After all, if all actions by regulators could be perfectly observed and understood and voted on, no regulator in a democratic system could survive instituting a policy that left an institutional polity... worse off than before.

173. See David Markell, "Slack" in the Administrative State and Its Implications for Governance: The Issue of Accountability, 84 OR. L. REV. 1, 4–6 (2005); Rossi, supra note 129, at 182–83.
participation in agency decision-making does appear to be a measure that can increase administrative legitimacy as measured by the rule of recognition.

My own view of a reformed regulatory state is one where regulators continue to function as the technical and scientific experts, and in making policy determinations weigh the expert knowledge with the informed opinion of electorate and peer officials in the political branches of our government. Such a system, I will argue, requires four specific reforms: procedural requirements to improve the quality of public participation; elimination of direct involvement in agency decision-making by all political actors; an obligation that an agency prepare a statement of overriding consideration when informed views of the people and other officials are disregarded in a decision; and limiting judicial review to questions of law and procedure. Each reform proposal is touched upon below, but largely the intent is to leave these proposals for future debate in the context of EDD and legal positivism.

Finally, in considering these reform proposals, and hopefully others brought in the future in the context of legal positivism, implementation should occur through Congressional action, and in particular through addition of specific provisions to the APA. While some reforms could occur through issuance of an Executive Order, legislative action better conforms to existing structural mechanisms that our system has in place to avoid additional second-order uncertainty problems. In other words, legislative action is a trustworthier, democratic process; unilateral executive action is not. Indeed, one of the concerns that has long dogged regulatory cost-benefit analysis (CBA), for example, is its unilateral imposition by President Reagan through Executive Order No. 12,129. Again, I make the assumption as others have, that reform of the administrative state will not occur through a constitutional amendment.

Professor David Driesen offers the following definition of CBA:

CBA of a proposed regulation consists of estimates of the regulation's costs and of the monetary value economists associate with the harms the regulation will avoid, which the literature commonly refers to as benefits. CBA contemplates quantification of the averted harms, including deaths, illness, and ecological destruction, in dollar terms. CBA advocates claim that this is often possible, but concede that regulators cannot quantify many relevant environmental and health effects.


174. Again, I make the assumption as others have, that reform of the administrative state will not occur through a constitutional amendment.

175. Professor David Driesen offers the following definition of CBA:

Scholars have long argued that CBA is illegal because such a requirement is inconsistent with many, if not most, action-specific environmental statutes. In reforming administrative law through EDD principles, we should not repeat the same mistakes by adopting measures through a less-than-democratic process.

1. Improve the Quality of Public Participation

Critics complain that participation in traditional “notice and comment” rulemaking “suffers from problems of quality.” At one end of the spectrum is the argument that public participation in rulemaking is often just a means to ensure that the regulatory outcome is generally responsive to the interests of the regulated. Others protest that participation has been dominated by a handful of individuals or groups who “carp, but offer little information to inform the process.” Even worse, regulators are often inundated with “postcard comments,” written and duplicated by an interest group without providing any new information to the regulator. Clearly, the participation process is broken.

EDD advocates want to fix the process by changing the nature and scope of public participation in agency rulemaking, typically by allowing for more one-on-one engagement with regulators through a discursive process. To be meaningful, and to generate more valid preferences for action, however, public deliberation also needs to be informed deliberation. As Professor Sunstein has argued, deliberation alone more often than not leads to group polarization. This effect is counteracted, however, where material on issue is presented with corresponding claims and values to group members.

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180. Noveck & Johnson, supra note 178, at 177.

181. Id.

182. See Noveck, supra note 178, at 636.


184. See id. at 73 n.6; Nou, supra note 178, at 636.
Agencies need, therefore, not only to reverse what can be seen as a trend toward reduced openness to the public, but also to take on the function of expanding the electorate's understanding of complex environmental issues from a technical and scientific viewpoint. By fashioning public participation in the context of "the agency is listening," where regulators put participants on the spot, often in live meetings, to give input without equal access to relevant information, government has produced a climate in which most Americans have chosen to shy away from, if not outright loathe, involvement in the rulemaking process. No wonder then that nearly seventy-five years ago, Yale botanist Paul Sears recommended that the United States hire a few thousand ecologists to directly advise citizens on how to participate in government decision-making in order to put the whole nation on a biological and economically sustainable track. It is time to take heed and implement such a discursive proposal.

2. Eliminate Direct Involvement in Rule-Making by Political Actors

As the Founders recognized in crafting the Constitution, good government relies on democratic, not political, decision-making. A legitimate administrative state, therefore, must be grounded in the idea of an independent lawmaking institution that relies on expertise, entrepreneurship, and stewardship—not politics—to implement its mission. Procedures to insulate agency decision-making from direct political control from the White House or Congress are essential; not only must tampering with agency scien-

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185. See, e.g., Markell, supra note 173, at 5.
186. EPA listening sessions are public community forums held to solicit public opinion on what can often be complex environmental issues. See, e.g., Listening Session Notice, 74 Fed. Reg. 57313 (Nov. 5, 2009) ("EPA is announcing a listening session to be held on November 23, 2009, during the public comment period for the external review draft document entitled, 'Toxicological Review of Choroprene: In Support of Summary Information on the Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS)."").
188. See Stewart, supra note 109, at 335 ("James Madison identified domination by economic and ideological factions as the central problem in a liberal polity.").
189. See Terence R. Mitchell & William G. Scott, Leadership Failures, the Distrusting Public, and Prospects of the Administrative State, 47 PUB. ADMIN. REV. 445, 446 (1987). Expertise, of course, refers to the formal education, administrative training, and organization socialization that administrators are believed to possess which allows them to be an expert in their tasks. See id. at 447. Entrepreneurship refers to the "administrator as a source of innovation and progress" on addressing social problems through regulation. Id. Finally, stewardship refers to the legal, and some might consider moral, responsibility that an administrator has to the public or others through the obligation to regulate. Id. at 448.
tific and technical documents stop, but unilaterally imposed Executive Branch requirements, such as the controversial use of independent cost-benefit analysis, must be ended. Such direct (and literally unchecked) interference by one political branch is far removed from our understanding of separation of powers that is so imperative to the concept of trustworthiness in our system. A wall must be erected between elected and appointed political officials on one hand, and professional, expert agency staff on the other hand.

This is not to say, however, that Congress and the President should play no role in agency decision-making. Congress certainly has vast discretion in its delegations to establish the range of factors an agency should consider in reaching a decision or to set limiting parameters on the agency to prevent certain types of regulations. The President also has significant authority to set a regulatory agenda—assuming that Congress has not set firm deadlines—that best meets his political needs or ideology. Moreover, both branches should play a greater role in the public deliberation

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190. See supra Part II.

191. Cost-benefit analysis ("CBA") can be defined as "the systematic identification of all future monetized costs and benefits associated with a proposed regulation or policy decision." Nou, supra note 18, at 603. Initiated originally by President Ronald Reagan's Executive Order 12,291, and utilized by each President since that time, CBA is argued by its advocates as a tool to "diminish[] interest-group pressures on regulation and also as a method for ensuring that the consequences of regulation are not shrouded in mystery but are instead made available for public inspection and review." Id. at 612 (citing CORNELIUS M. KERWIN, RULEMAKING: HOW GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WRITE LAW AND MAKE POLICY 178 (2003)). CBA opponents respond that the procedure has resulted in greater control by political interest groups, and far less transparency in the rulemaking process. See, e.g., ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR., CRIMES AGAINST NATURE: HOW GEORGE W. BUSH AND HIS CORPORATE PALS ARE PLUNDERING THE COUNTRY AND HIJACKING OUR DEMOCRACY 59 (2004). For a detailed review of the arguments against CBA, see THOMAS O. MCGARITY, SIDNEY SHAPIRO & DAVID BOLLIER, SOPHISTICATED SABOTAGE: THE INTELLECTUAL GAMES USED TO SUBVERT RESPONSIBLE REGULATION (2004).


193. For example, in amending the Clean Air Act in 1990, Congress included a special provision relating to emissions of hazardous air pollutants from certain electric generating units. This provision, known as section 112(n), prevented the EPA from regulating these sources until a scientific study was performed and a regulatory determination made that "such regulation is appropriate and necessary." 42 U.S.C. § 7412(n)(1)(A) (2006).

194. See Evan J. Criddle, Fiduciary Foundations of Administrative Law, 54 UCLA L. REV. 117, 148-49 (2006); see also Steven Croley, White House Review of Agency Rulemaking: An Empirical Investigation, 70 U. CHI. L. REV. 821, 837 (2003) ("[B]y most acts of delegation Congress intends for agencies to apply their expertise in the course of exercising their discretion. Where instead Congress wants the president to have influence over particular decisions that agencies make, as opposed to agenda-setting influence in ordering their statutory priorities, Congress can so indicate by specifically delegating power to a White House agency. But in the normal course, Congress delegates regulatory power to agencies so that agencies, not the President, can exercise that power.").
process for agency rulemaking. Indeed, a democratic system necessarily requires that an agency not only take into account the relevant scientific aspects of the problem, but, as mentioned, the informed political views of the public and government officials. What is most needed, however, is a rational process for agencies to weigh these inputs and address how tension between science and policy is to be resolved by the agency. The vehicle for doing so, it is suggested, is not the traditional "concise general statement of [the rule's] basis and purpose" requirement of the APA, but instead a detailed statement of overriding consideration reflecting on the agency's treatment of outside information.

3. Require Agencies to Prepare a Statement of Overriding Considerations

Quite possibly a unique requirement in American law, the California Environmental Quality Act requires that before an agency approves a project that has been shown to have unmitigated environmental impacts, the agency must first adopt a statement of overriding considerations, which is "a declaration identifying specific social or economic factors that justify the failure to mitigate the negative environmental consequences." Similarly, federal agencies should be required to prepare a statement explaining why certain political concerns were elevated in the decision-making process where substantial technical or scientific evidence indicates that regulatory action would be a wise choice of action to protect environmental resources or public health. As already discussed, this proposal reflects the belief that, to Americans, even more important than the regulatory outcome is the transparency and accountability of the regulatory process. If an agency indicates that it chose a specific regulatory action as a means to address the President's economic policies, or because of limitations on its authority placed by Congress, than as with a poor decision by any other branch of government, there is at least a sense of legitimacy to the regulatory action grounded in process. Moreover, the American public will be in a better position to utilize other democratic processes to effectuate a change to the underlying political basis for the regulatory decision.

4. Limit Judicial Review to Questions of Law and Procedure

Judge Wald provides a luminous, if not sometimes near-laughable, examination of the struggle courts have engaged in to establish the scope of review to apply to agency rulemakings since the 1970's, with a seemingly illogical attempt to accommodate both judicial deference to, and scrutiny of, the agency within the same judicial doctrine. Indeed, in the end Judge Wald acknowledges that under the "arbitrary and capricious" standard of review, most often the court is simply struggling to find some agency explanation that it can deem "adequate." The lack of any defined components of an "adequate explanation," however, has "inevitably [left] courts open to the charge that the results of our review are inconsistent and reflect the political or philosophical preferences of the judges ... rather than any objective standard." Such review, of course, can be considered necessary (or inevitable) in a system where agencies are seen as illegitimate actors, but it should no longer be tolerated in a system where agency decision-making is the result of trust-inducing, deliberative processes and procedures. In such a "reformed" system, judicial review could be relegated to review of agency interpretation of and faithfulness to the law, and its adherence to proper procedure. This, of course, is a function that the Founders intended that the courts would perform within our system where lawmaking institutions are considered both legitimate and co-equal.

B. Defending EDD: Restoring American Environmental and Democratic Values

Inevitably, any proposal for regulatory reform will be challenged as costly and inefficient. Certainly, for those who benefit from the current institutional arrangements—in which abuses of power and corruption are tolerated in exchanges for governmental benefits...
and services—such concerns are paramount. For those, however, concerned with restoring legitimacy to the American system of government, and afraid of the consequences if it is not, cost and efficiency plays little if any role in judging reform proposals. Surely, the Founders’ desire to build a system to check political power in a democratic fashion trumped their concerns over the bulkiness and cost of government.

With respect to long-term problems, like those posed by environmental policy and the legitimacy of the administrative state, a broader focus is appropriate. In this context, the importance of law “turns as much on its ability to help our successors share our values, and to help both ourselves and our successors actually put those values into practice, as on its direct impact on current behavior.” And much is at stake. Not only is environmental policy in a decade-long standstill, there is deep agreement among the public that an “appreciable segment of regulatory policy is [simply] counterproductive.” Not only does the belief that the government often does “more harm than good resonate[] strongly with many ‘average’ Americans,” but government decision-making is often seen to be largely undemocratic. Our concern at this point should not just be in correcting the democratic deficiencies of the administrative state, but with the consequences of continued official acceptance of such a system and/or the perceived use of the administrative state by the constitutional branches to circumvent constraints placed on them to ensure their trustworthiness. Under such conditions, it can only be so long, if it has not already occurred, that illegitimacy, as measured by a lack of trust in the system, begins to afflict government institutions once considered secure under the rule of recognition.

206. Id.
208. Id.
210. Indeed, while Congress was once trusted to develop sound environmental and other social policies, it is now marked by a “blood feud” among the political parties that has resulted in “an era in which Congress is paralyzed.” E. Donald Elliot, Portage Strategies for Adapting Environmental Law and Policy During a Logjam Era, 17 N.Y.U. Envtl. L.J. 24, 24 (2008); see also Richard J. Lazarus, Congressional Descent: The Demise of Deliberative Democracy in Environmental Law, 94 Geo. L.J. 619, 620–22 (comparing “an ascent” in the 1970s and 1980s in Congress’ wielding of lawmaking authority to its more recent “descent” and the impact this has had on environmental law).
Certainly EDD does not hold the only answer to the illegitimacy problem. The process, however, that EDD promises to inject into administrative decision-making can play an important role in promoting the legitimacy of administrative policies and protect against violations of the public trust by agency officials. More importantly, procedurally just processes, particularly those with public participation, are trusted to lead to better substantive decisions. This is the heart of what Americans believe to be democracy and what constitutes our ultimate rule of recognition.211

Conclusion

“Culture, like the natural environment, will flourish if well tended and collapse if polluted and despoiled.”212

Improving any existing governance structures to better address environmental protection has proven to be a formidable challenge in the past.213 Undertaking an administrative reform effort to improve environmental protection and restore the trust in government necessary to the legitimacy of the administrative state, therefore, would seem a near impossible undertaking. But as with any undertaking, such reform needs to be fashioned procedure-by-procedure, taking one step at a time. It is, of course, through the establishment of democratic agency procedure that it will be possible “for issues and contributions, information and reasons to float freely” within agency decision-making space.214 Such processes are necessary for the development of the political will-formation that will lead to just and agreeable decision-making that the populace can once again trust.215 Moreover, through the lens of legal positivism, such processes are also necessary if our environmental administrative apparatus is to be seen as a legitimate source of primary environmental law. EDD offers such hope for administrative legitimacy; hope that stands a chance to prevail as measured by

211. See Joseph Raz, Liberalism, Skepticism, and Democracy, 74 IOWA L. REV. 761, 779 (1989) (“Democracy is best understood as a political system allowing individuals opportunities for informed participation in the political process whose purpose is the promotion of sound decisions.”).
214. MASON, supra note 117, at 51 (citing JURGEN HABERMAS, BETWEEN FACTS AND NORMS: CONTRIBUTIONS TO A DISCOURSE THEORY OF LAW AND DEMOCRACY 448 (William Rehg trans., 1996)).
215. See id.
America’s deeply rooted democratic values and beliefs that constitute our system’s rules of recognition.