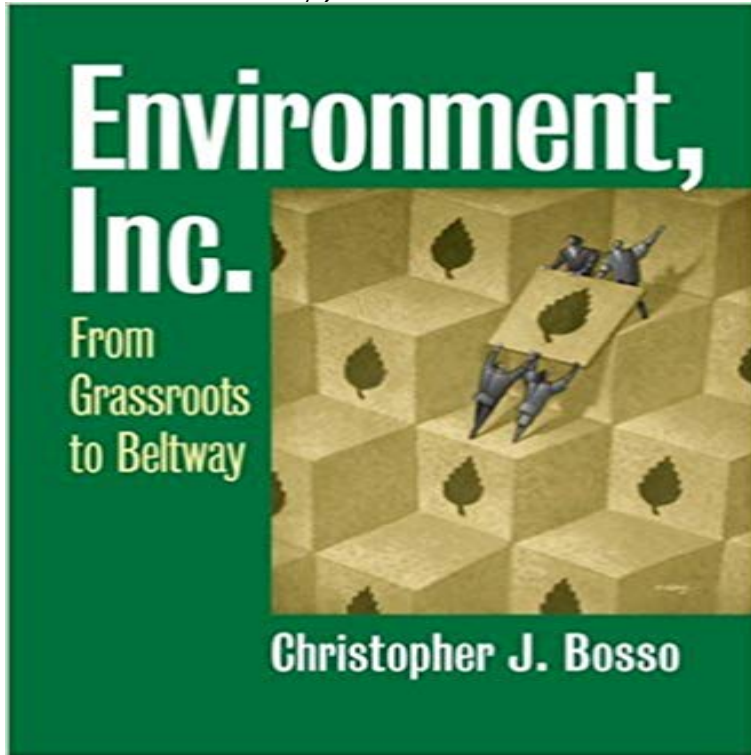


Environment, Inc.: From Grassroots to Beltway (Studies in Government & Public Policy)



We expect Birkenstocks. We find wing-tips. Professional organizations that advocate on behalf of environmental issues have become a permanent part of the American political landscape. From the Sierra Club to the Rainforest Action Network, these groups represent more than eleven million members and claim more than \$3.5 billion in assets. Sometimes lambasted for non-stop fund-raising, top-heavy bureaucracies, or agendas out of touch with local concerns, they remain staunch advocates for Mother Nature in the marble halls of Washington. But what happens to a grassroots movement when it goes mainstream? In this insightful book, Christopher Bosso considers how organizations that once contested the Establishment have become an establishment of their own. Environment, Inc. is the only book to examine the evolution of a national advocacy community over the span of a century. Bosso describes the transformation of an inchoate 1960s movement into fixtures of contemporary politics to show how this transformation was necessary for the success of environmental policy. Presenting some thirty organizations that lie at the core of the national environmental advocacy community today's environmental establishment he examines these groups both individually and collectively to clarify their origins, organizational evolution, and methods of operation. He looks at annual reports and tax forms to assess their financial health and organizational maintenance, and he describes how people whose heart is in the great outdoors have been forced to become more businesslike in order to survive in a political context that places a premium on presence. Bosso seeks to learn why organizations born in social movements become larger, more professional, and more bureaucratic over time. He tells how warhorses like the Sierra Club and National Audubon Society have

survived in the face of an influx of competitors, and why so relatively few new national organizations have appeared in recent years. In examining the success of some and the demise of others, he sheds light on how organizations adapt to the shifting winds of politics and economics. As Bosso observes, the very normalcy of today's environmental community speaks volumes about the contours of American democracy. He shows that these groups, for all their flaws, remain the most consistent promoters of environmental values in a political system based on organized advocacy. His cogent analysis offers new insights into the nature of interest group politics in the United States.

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