



NEPA: The Accepted Lies and Mistakes About This Critical Environmental Law

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Suppose a friend calls you up and says he wants you to invest a million dollars in a new company that he heard is going to make tons of money. Before you decide whether to do so, wouldn't you expect to know what the risks of losing your money might be? Wouldn't you investigate the people who are going to run the new company and the kind of activities they intend to engage in, so you have a sense of whether it's a safe thing to do with your money?

That's the common-sense idea behind the National Environmental Policy Act, whose adoption by Congress kicked off the "environmental decade" of the 1970s.

NEPA **requires** government agencies to use a transparent process with meaningful public participation to consider the potential environmental effects of their actions before committing to them. It is one of the United States' bedrock environmental protection statutes and has been so widely emulated in other countries that it has become known as the "**Magna Carta**" of global environmental law.