



**Environmental
and Energy
Study Institute**

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1995-1996 Annual Report

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) is a non-profit organization founded in 1984 and dedicated to promoting environmentally sustainable societies. EESI believes meeting this goal requires transitions to social and economic patterns that sustain people and the natural resources upon which present and future generations depend.

EESI's task is to produce credible, timely information and innovative policy ideas that lead to these transitions. These products take the form of briefings, workshops, publications, task forces and working groups. Among the publications are the widely respected *EESI Weekly Bulletin* on environmental, energy and natural resources legislation in Congress, as well as a variety of special reports containing news and analysis on timely issues.

EESI's target audience is Congress and other national policymakers — and the people who influence them. EESI enjoys a strategic position with national policymakers as the nation's only independent organization established by Congressional environmental and energy leaders.

EESI is based in the nation's capital, but it actively works with people in all parts of the country to bring their experiences and ideas to bear on national policies, which can help, or hinder, their aspirations.

Besides its publications, EESI carries out policymaker education and analysis projects in the areas of energy efficiency and renewable energy, transportation, sustainable communities, water quality and conservation, global climate change, fiscal policy and military base cleanup. Cross-cutting efforts are focused on alternative environmental strategies.

Primary funding for the tax-exempt Institute comes from foundations. Other support comes from publication sales, individuals, corporations and government. Many individuals support EESI through Earth Share, a workplace giving federation.

Recent Accomplishments: The year 1995 started with the bi-partisan national consensus about the environment disintegrating into deep partisan divisions. By mid-year, however, efforts to roll back decades of environmental progress had been blocked on many fronts, and the agenda was shifting from roll back to looking for new and innovative ways to continue environmental progress. Throughout, we continued to carry out the initiatives for which EESI is most respected and valued: educating policymakers, building leadership, bring in the best ideas from around the

country and bridging differences among various constituencies. This work confirmed once again the power of timely and credible information and innovative ideas which meet multiple environmental, energy and economic needs.

Here are some of the highlights:

- **Publications** — We strengthened and expanded our publication program to ensure that policymakers got the best possible information — so they could better understand the environmental implications of major proposals and make better informed decisions about them. In total, we published more than 100 well-received reports on key environmental, energy and natural resources issues and legislation, with readership in the thousands all over the country.
- **Policy Education** — We carried out more than a dozen education briefings on key topics, with the same goals of generating better understanding and better decisions. Hundreds of decisionmakers participated. The topics ranged from the pros and cons of risk assessment legislation, to the status of climate change science, to advances in energy efficiency.
- **Safe Drinking Water** — We developed creative proposals to cut the costs of federal drinking regulations, while continuing to ensure safe drinking water to all Americans. These proposals were integrated into the new Safe Drinking Water Act, one of the few major environmental bills to pass Congress and be signed into law by the President.
- **Renewable Energy** — Federal funding for new solar energy technologies is essential to drive down costs, ensure reliable performance, build customer awareness and create a mainstream market. To help mobilize leadership for these new technologies, we helped create a Congressional Renewable Energy Caucus. The caucus disseminated credible information on renewable technologies and their benefits to local economies, and it led successful efforts to boost federal funding for renewables.
- **Tax Reform and the Environment** — We carried out extensive research and educational activities on how the U.S. tax code affects the environment, as well as possible tax reforms which could help do a better job of protecting the environment and producing jobs and investments.
- **Clean Transportation** — Cleaner, more efficient vehicles are critical to reducing urban air pollution, cutting oil imports and stabilizing greenhouse gas emissions. We conducted research which will enable us to develop and promote model incentives designed to accelerate the introduction of clean, advanced vehicles into the mainstream market place.

As another initiative of our clean transportation work, we led policy education programs to support successful implementation of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) — the landmark law that is ushering in a more environmentally sound transportation system and reducing over-reliance on the private automobile.

- **Urban Sprawl and Sustainable Communities** — More and more communities all over the country are trying to better manage urban and suburban sprawl and reduce its adverse impacts on the environment, local economies and jobs, and tax rates. We worked with community activists to identify the powerful federal impediments to effective local action and to put incentives for more sustainable communities in their place. EESI serves as a two-way conduit of information and ideas between communities and federal policymakers who can help them meet their aspirations. Several of the initiative's proposals have been adopted by Vice President Al Gore.
- **Cleaning Up Military Bases** — Military bases are often highly polluted, and many of them are shutting down, creating both environmental and economic challenges for nearby communities. We worked with affected communities and the federal government to expedite the clean up and community re-use of these facilities.
- **Water Conservation** — Water conservation, much like energy efficiency strategies, can deliver multiple economic and environmental benefits. Carrying out aggressive educational programs, we have been a leader in advancing strategies to help residential, agricultural and industrial consumers use water more efficiently and, in the process, save money, improve water quality and protect fish and wildlife. Much of this work has been focused on the arid West, but the East is increasingly facing water shortages and attendant problems.

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