

Environmental Protection

ANNCR: Environmental Protection – Today on Congressional Moment.

Voice 2: "Only within the moment of time represented by the present century, has one species—man—acquired significant power to alter the nature of his world."

ANNCR: That was from Rachel Carson's 1962 book, "Silent Spring," one of the strongest voices for environmental protection.

During the 1960s, many Americans were becoming increasingly concerned about ongoing abuses of land, air, water, and wildlife. As a result, the first Earth Day was planned internationally, and held on April 22nd, 1970. Millions of Americans participated.

It was such a huge event that Congress was shut down for the day, so that members could participate in local Earth Day events in their home districts. By May of 1971, the environment had become a major concern for 25% of Americans, up from only 1% in 1969.

The Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, was created when a Republican President, Richard Nixon, and a Democratic-controlled Congress worked together to consolidate 44 Federal agencies into a new federal agency with the power to enforce national standards. Earth Day proved to be the catalyst.

The EPA officially started on December 2nd, 1970. Over the years, Congress has steadily expanded its authority into new areas. The challenge remains to balance environmental concerns with the needs of an ever-growing population.

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