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## **Environmental Health Risks and Public Policy: Decision Making in Free Societies (The Jessie and John Danz Lecture Series)**

*David V. Bates*

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**David V. Bates : Environmental Health Risks and Public Policy: Decision Making in Free Societies (The Jessie and John Danz Lecture Series)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Environmental Health Risks and Public Policy: Decision Making in Free Societies (The Jessie and John Danz Lecture Series):

Modern industrial societies have created not only the goods and services that add productivity and pleasure to modern life, but also hazardous and unlooked-for side effects. Many significant technological advances - automobiles, fire retardation, durable paints, electrical appliances - have a dark side, their proven or putative implication in major risks to public health. How democratic societies discover and deal with such health hazards is the theme of Environmental Health Risks and Public Policy. Often frightening in its direct recitation of medical evidence, always compelling as the work of a medical man deeply concerned with human health, it examines the ways in which science and public policy interact, sometimes to protect the public, sometimes to thwart prompt action. Environmental Health Risks and Public Policy compares decision making in Canada, Britain, and the United States, and the impact of different political traditions on the process. The book offers conclusions about the central role of environmental epidemiology as the

"detective" science in elucidating health effects of human technological advances, and examines the different, often conflicting, sometimes colluding roles of government, industry, and the general public in the debate over public health hazards.

This is a very readable book that provides a good overview and introduction to the complex world of environmental science and policy. This book is a must read for students of environmental epidemiology. (Aleck Ostry Revue Canadienne de Sante Publique) Modern industrial societies have created not only the goods and services that add productivity and pleasure to modern life, but also hazardous and unlooked-for side effects. Many significant technological advances -- automobiles, fire retardation, durable paints, electrical appliances -- have a dark side, their proven or putative implication in major risks to public health. How democratic societies discover and deal with such health hazards is the theme of *Environmental Health Risks and Public Policy*. Often frightening in its direct recitation of medical evidence, always compelling as the work of a medical man deeply concerned with human health, it examines the ways in which science and public policy interact, sometimes to protect the public, sometimes to thwart prompt action. As society's awareness of environmental effects on public health has grown, scientists (especially epidemiologists) have been increasingly drawn into the public arena. The design of studies, the manipulation of statistics, and additional risk factors influence the acceptance of "hazards" as clearly causing certain diseases. In addition, the often major economic effects of reducing these health hazards make formulation of public policy concerning their control a fractious business. Environmental scientists, the media, lawyers, and politicians have difficulty dealing with multifactorial disease, and are still learning how the questions should be framed for an informed public debate on the issues raised. *Environmental Health Risks and Public Policy* compares decision making in Canada, Britain, and the United States, and the impact of different political traditions on the process. The place and limitations of formal risk assessment are discussed. The book offers conclusions about the central role of environmental epidemiology as the "detective" science in elucidating health effects of human technological advances, and examines the different, often conflicting, sometimes colluding roles of government, industry, and the general public in the debate over public health hazards.

About the Author David V. Bates is professor emeritus of health care and epidemiology, and formerly Dean of Medicine, at the University of British Columbia. He has published extensively on pulmonary medicine and is a leading figure in international air pollution health effects research.