

# Research on Environmental Policy Tools in China

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## ABSTRACT

At present, environmental pollution and destruction are major problems of human existence. We need to understand and grasp the root causes of China's environmental policies and the historical development process of environmental policies. The Chinese government needs to take some measures and actions to solve these problems. Therefore, it is necessary to protect the ecological environment and choose better tools for environmental governance according to local conditions, so as to achieve the overall goals of improving environmental quality and managing the ecological environment more effectively.

**Keywords:** *policy tools, Environmental pollution, environmental quality improvement*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are various understandings of the definition of public policy: based on foreign scholars' belief that public policy is what all governments decide to do or do not decide to do, others believe that public policy is an authoritative distribution of the value of the whole society. According to Chinese scholars, public policy is the action plan or inaction plan chosen by public authorities without solving some public problems or meeting some public needs.

The definition of environmental policy refers to the code of conduct in the process of selecting, synthesizing, distributing and implementing the social and economic interests of the environment through the development goals of human beings and the natural environment to choose the way of exploiting China's natural resources and protecting the ecological environment. The definition indicates that the purpose of environmental policies is to promote the harmonious and stable development of the human and social environment. In other words, the current environmental problems in China are becoming more and more serious, which is also one of the important issues affecting the development of China and the world. At present, with the rapid development of China's industrialization, the economy has also achieved rapid development. However, we can see that the social and economic development is getting better and better, and at the same time, it is breaking the illusion of the furniture garden on which we live.

## 2. EVOLUTION OF CHINA'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

In 1972, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment promoted and encouraged the first step of China's current environmental protection. After the conference, China began to set up environmental protection agencies and began to prevent and plan industrial pollution, such as waste water, exhaust gas and solid waste. With the promulgation of the Environmental Protection Law, a series of laws and regulations on environmental protection have been improved. In 1996, when China launched the ninth Five-year Plan, the country began to push through two major initiatives, total control and green projects, in an effort to reduce environmental pollution. Since 1997, the central government, provinces, municipalities and local governments have begun to focus on the discussion of environmental protection issues, in-depth clear countermeasures, environmental protection has become a system.

Since the year of reform and opening up, China has also made many important decisions on environmental protection. The CPC Central Committee and the State Council, among others, have strictly managed environmental protection and issued many decisions on environmental protection. It can be seen from this that at the very beginning, China's environmental decision-making mainly strengthened and improved laws and regulations on environmental protection, with emphasis on strengthening the environmental protection management system. Later, the State Council promulgated major decisions on the environmental protection system. There are still some regions that advocate environmental priority policies, environmental protection policies, development

prohibition policies and restrictions on development projects, giving top priority to protecting the ecological environment. China has decided to give priority to environmental protection over economic development. The most important thing for China is to make use of environmental policies to strengthen environmental protection through the adjustment of industrial structure. We should economize on the development of resources, make good use of resources, develop the economy in a clean and safe manner, and adhere to the realization of sustainable development.

### **3. ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY TOOLS**

Environmental policy is a system. The above evolution of China's environmental policy shows that China's environmental policy measures are still of traditional significance. However, adopting this traditional environmental policy system has the limitations of low efficiency, insufficient performance and high cost. However, traditional management environmental policy and economic environmental management policy will become the direction and goal of China's future development.

#### ***3.1. Voluntary agreement environmental policy instruments***

The origin and development of voluntary environmental policies are the result of the mutual influence and utilization between producers and consumers of enterprises in the public environmental market. In addition, having understood the assumptions of traditional thinkers, many enterprises prefer to reduce environmental input so as to reduce costs in order to pursue profit maximization. But voluntary agreement type environmental policy it is not a mandatory agreement, it is a voluntary agreement, this is because a lot of enterprises under the guidance of the environmental policy goal, many companies adopted a policy of voluntary agreement type environment, a lot of economic man volunteered to improve the environmental performance of motivation, and persuade consumers green consumption idea, the rise of environmental groups and the characteristics of enterprise voluntary agreement of their own. But voluntary environmental policy is not motivated solely by laws, regulations or other coercive means. It is a socially voluntary and sparse view of the environment, and caring for our planet and our home is an ideology.[1]

Many scholars and entrepreneurs believe that the establishment of voluntary environmental improvement policies is effective for improving performance and reducing costs, while also bringing greater flexibility to enterprises based on the management of environmental

policies facing environmental difficulties. However, there are still many scholars who think that due to the binding force and limitation of enterprises' voluntary environmental agreement policies, they are under pressure of regulation. Therefore, voluntary agreement environmental policies are both unchangeable and irreplaceable. After accurate testing, the pressure of regulating enterprises has a significant impact on their participation in environmental decision-making and the effective improvement of enterprise environmental performance, but there is no good strong evidence to prove that voluntary environmental policies have a significant impact on enterprises' cost reduction. Although many scholars for voluntary agreement, there exist great controversy, environmental policy through time to prove, with the development of China's economic level, the gradual improvement of the level of Chinese enterprises development, and participation of the improvement in people's consumption idea change, but as the environmental policy of the newly discovered voluntary agreement type environmental policy will also get good development and utilization, however I type environmental policy to China's voluntary agreement will be effective to improve the performance of the development.

#### ***3.2. Economic environmental policies***

It is irreplaceable that Chinese government organs have played an important role in the process of implementing institutional economic environmental policies. The fundamental difference between economic environmental policies and regulatory environmental policies is based on the role played by the market and the role of rational use of resource allocation. The ultimate goal of environmental management is to realize the equilibrium of market demand.[2]

##### ***3.2.1. Emission charge system and emission tax***

The pollution charge system regulates polluters by charging them for polluting our ecological environment, while regulating them by charging them for polluting and burdening the environment. Chinese government agencies set the standards and levels of charges for polluters, so that polluters will impose charges in the form of a tax equal to the cost of pollution. As a result, governments will put economic pressure on polluters so that they can apply technological innovation and find cheaper and more effective ways to control pollution. This is conducive to reducing the composition efficiency will also be improved. Over the years, as people have become more active and polluted the environment, governments have had to adopt such a system to control polluters.

Up to now, there has not been an accurate definition of environmental tax accepted by human beings. It takes the cost of environmental pollution and destruction of

ecological balance as a kind of production cost and market value, and the problem of environmental pollution as a kind of production cost and an economic means for the allocation of market environmental resources. Environmental taxes are mainly divided into sulfur dioxide tax, water pollution tax, etc., and what is mainly discussed here is pollutant emission tax.

But looking for a way of reasonable fee during the vagaries of emission rate fluctuated to enterprises to make more reasonable planning arrangements, observing from the perspective of China's emissions rate, discharge rate at present in China there are some shortcomings, China is not very good use of environmental policy instruments on emissions rate control effectively solve, such as discharge rate is far lower than the pollutants processing costs, China's emissions rate system regulation; The authority of the emission rate is poor, and there are many difficulties and obstacles in the process of improvement. Therefore, it is objectively necessary to change the emission rate tax.[3]

### 3.2.2. Environmental emission trading system

The central idea of environmental emission rights must meet all the requirements on the premise of protecting the environment. Environmental authorities should establish the right in accordance with laws and regulations. However, they should use this right to buy and sell in the market and use it to control the total amount of emission.[4] The right to pollute is like a permit. Emissions trading have to be measured in the market, encouraging enterprises will appear this kind of environmental policy in an economic system in the market to reduce the emissions of pollution, however, will save emissions targets of temporary storage for the future development itself to expand or economic returns were obtained through the sale of surplus emission, so as to achieve the market for the purpose of enterprise environmental behavior to compensate. Enterprises should make use of such environmental protection policies to optimize their own interests so as to improve their enthusiasm for environmental governance. However, the total emission of pollutants should be controlled within a standard range, and the emission governance decisions should be changed from being supervised by the government to conscious market behaviors. The system of emission reduction is an effective means of control. Earlier implementation of discharge permit system is China's environmental protection system, and it is quite perfect and mature compared with developed countries, the slow development of Chinese emissions policy, environmental departments and companies need to continue to progress and improve the better use of the policy, but with individual in developed countries, there are obvious gap, our country must work together to use side advantageous resources policy to effectively implement, which makes our living environment will be more and more healthy.[5]

### 3.3. Advantages of China's environmental policy tools

#### 3.3.1. Cost reduction and efficiency improvement.

At present, there are more and more human activities and more and more serious environmental pollution. Every country provides a lot of human resources and financial resources to solve the environmental pollution problems faced by its own country, which ultimately fails to achieve good results. In this way, with the gradual thinking and investigation of people to find a better decision to protect environmental pollution, and can pay less cost to improve this goal. By comparing the policy tools of the market with the traditional policy tools, a clear conclusion can be drawn that it has the effect of reducing costs, so this kind of decision has attracted the attention of the environmental protection department.

#### 3.3.2. Conducive to the innovation and progress of science and technology

On the basis of market policy tools, economic motivation is adopted, which mainly ACTS on the mutual influence between enterprises and individuals. Through the collection of pollutant discharge fees, polluters further reduce and weaken the degree of environmental pollution on the basis of promoting their own interests. In environmental policy instruments, more efficient gains can be made from tradable emissions through market transactions, such as improvements in technology, reduction of pollution and savings in waste emissions. [6]

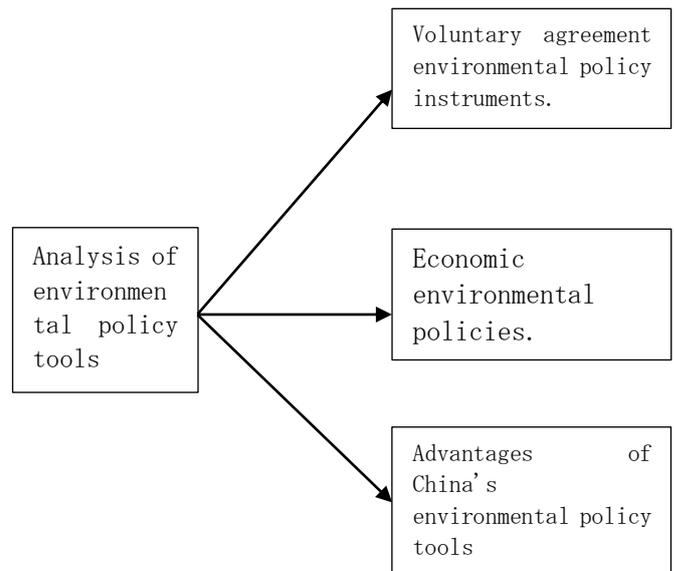


Figure 1. Analysis of environmental policy tools

#### 4. CONCLUSION

China adopt the traditional policy of the development of the management system of the low efficiency, has initiated a new innovation policy system tools, but not a kind of environmental policy system has its own advantages and disadvantages, new policy control there are a lot of controversy. Through understanding that China's environmental governance system must be a combination of multiple policies, because they are an organic whole, however, in order to ensure human health and optimize the quality of our living environment, it is impossible to rely on only one policy system. In short, to achieve the environmental policy objectives and improve the current environmental situation, China must use a comprehensive scientific, many kinds of policy tools to improve the environmental policy system. Us in choosing the correct use of environmental policy instruments at the same time, can not copy foreign policy, also cannot blind environmental policy, we should combine the characteristics and the actual policy itself, according to the change of policy and the environment change and improvement of the embodiment of the system of environmental policy change multiterminal, China should make better use of environmental policy tools to improve and develop environmental protection.

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