STATE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN WEST GERMANY: AIR POLLUTION CONTROL IN NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA

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ABSTRACT

North Rhine Westphalia was one of the first states of West Germany to adopt vigorous air pollution control legislation and implementation strategies. Its air pollution control research laboratories have long been among the best in the world. The strategies for air quality maintenance are a combination of state and local planning, building inspection regulations, and technical measures for emission reduction. Through such strategies North Rhine-Westphalia has achieved a significant reduction in sulfur dioxide, particulate matter and nitrogen oxide pollutants. This article reviews the organizational structure for environmental management in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and some of the strategies which it has adopted to control air pollution.

The State of North Rhine-Westphalia is the most heavily industrialized state of West Germany. By the early nineteen-fifties, the consequences of this heavy industrialization were beginning to be felt in North Rhine-Westphalia and environmental pollution became the subject of considerable inquiry. The state authorities worked closely with the federal authorities in organizing research efforts and in the establishment of the foundations for the preservation of the quality of the environment. By the end of the nineteen-fifties, the federal and state governments of West Germany began to revise the legal basis for environmental pollution control and developed new standards for such control. North Rhine-Westphalia has been one of the leading German states in the initiation of environmental pollution control measures.