

## PUBLIC POLICY AND THE GOVERNMENT

### Performance Standard 14A.I

Report an analysis of the pros and cons of the environmental “self-audit” policy in terms of its impacts accordingly:

- *Knowledge*: Define and describe the elements of the environmental “self-audit” policy and current issues concerning the environment.
- *Reasoning*: Analyze the pros and cons of the “self-audit” policy in terms of its impact on public policies and the environment.
- *Communication*: Produce a 150 – 200 word essay or a 5-slide computer-generated display that are well-focused, well-organized and well-detailed; express all ideas in a way that provides evidence of knowledge and reasoning processes.

### Procedures

1. *In order to understand and explain basic principles of the United States government (14A)*, students should experience sufficient learning opportunities to develop the following skills:
  - Analyze the pros and cons of public policies.
  - Analyze how public policy issues are influenced by government actions (e.g., transportation, the environment).
2. Have students review and discuss the assessment task and how the rubric will be used to evaluate their work.
3. Have students research the elements and requirements of the environmental “self-audit” policy, taking notes especially on how it impacts (positively or negatively) other environmental public policies and the environment itself. Students should also research articles on the self-audit policy and become aware of the elements of other national and state environmental policies. (The purpose of the “self-audit” policy is to enhance the protection of human health and the environment by encouraging regulated entities to voluntarily discover, promptly disclose, and expeditiously correct violations of federal environmental requirements.)
4. Ask each student to write a 150 – 200 word essay or a 5-slide, computer-generated display (e.g., Power Point) as follows:
  - Include the pros and cons of the "self-audit" environmental policy.
  - Include a prediction of the impact of the "self-audit" policy on the national environment.
5. Evaluate each student’s work using the Social Science Rubric as follows and add the scores to determine the performance level:
  - *Knowledge*: The descriptions of environmental issues and the requirements of the “self-audit” policy were complete and accurate.
  - *Reasoning*: The analysis of the pros and cons of the “self-audit” policy and its impacts on other environmental policies and the environment was thorough, objective and balanced.
  - *Communication*: The essay contained at least 150 - 200 words or the 5-slide display were well-focused, well-organized, and well-detailed; the knowledge and reasoning were completely and effectively communicated.

### Examples of Student Work follow

#### Time Requirements

- Two class periods

### Resources

- Information from environmental and various news sources regarding Colorado and other states' experiences with the "self-audit" policy
- Internet access to "self-audit" policy documents
- Social Science Rubric



Many good things could come from self-audit. If companies find a problem they have the chance to fix it without getting in trouble. It will also give companies more freedom from the government defining the word "free" in our constitution.

Many bad things can also come from self-audit. Many companies will try to hide the problems they find instead of fixing them, without getting into trouble. This would cause worse outbreaks of diseases especially cancer.

I predict that companies will not be honest, and, if self-audits are allowed, companies will try to hide what they find, using it for their benefit. The environment will be more polluted than ever and disease rates will shoot up like never before, being a long term effect.

While the recently introduced self-audit law sounds like a good idea, how well it would work depends on the integrity of the companies.

Ms. Norton raises several good points in her speech and I agree that there are some positive aspects of this law. With the promise of self-audits not counting against them, some companies may be willing to fix problems that they know they have but haven't reported because they fear the consequences they will face under current laws. Self-audit laws will also save the government money. While the government may still have to audit some companies, most should be able to handle it themselves thus relieving the need for so many government audits.

The negative aspects of self-audit laws outweigh the positive ones, in my opinion. Companies will take advantage of the lack of government auditing. Under self-audit laws, it would be possible for a company to discover a problem and to not report it. The self-audit laws would give them more time before they are actually caught. Then the company could claim that it didn't know and the self-audit laws could protect the company from being punished.

I think that if self-audit laws are passed, that we will see a decline in the health of the National Environment. The companies that are already doing things that are hazardous to the environment will most likely continue to do what they are doing even with the self-audit option. I also think that some companies will be motivated to do things that are harmful to the environment because self-audit laws would remove the companies' fear of government audits. Passing self-audit laws may sound like a good idea but it would actually hurt the environment.