

Institute for Policy Integrity  
New York University School of Law

For Immediate Release  
January 18, 2011

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## **STATEMENT ON PRESIDENT OBAMA'S NEW EXECUTIVE ORDER**

Richard Revesz, Dean of NYU School of Law and Policy Integrity's Faculty Director:

The Executive Order announced today by President Obama should be embraced by those who favor strong protections for the environment, public health, and safety. It provides a blueprint for adopting beneficial regulations that protect the well-being of Americans while at the same time pursuing policies that promote economic growth and the creation of jobs.

President Obama makes several noteworthy changes to the federal process for regulatory review that progressive groups should embrace.

First, he underscores the importance of considering the equitable distributional impacts of regulation, to protect the well-being of the most vulnerable groups in our society. Second, he creates more opportunities for public participation. Third, he expresses a strong commitment to scientific integrity, to prevent risk assessments from being skewed to promote political ends. Fourth, he incorporates under-regulation into retrospective review of rules, recognizing that too little regulation can be as pernicious as too much. Fifth, he asks for better coordination among federal agencies so that they don't work at cross purposes. Sixth, he enhances the transparency of the regulatory process, so that the public can better evaluate the actions of the government.

The cumulative effect of these changes is to balance the scales of cost-benefit analysis in the direction of strong and effective government protections for the American people.

Michael Livermore, Policy Integrity's Executive Director:

Strong environmental and public health policy often make good economic sense. The value of our economy is not increased when children are sickened or a community's safety is put at risk. With this Order, the President opens new channels for public interest groups to make that case.

By signing this document, Obama will reiterate his commitment to the pragmatic notion that data counts for more than demagoguery. This move demonstrates the administration's belief that when cost-benefit analysis is done right, the facts often support stronger protections.

In the long term, this Order is likely to displease those industry groups that want less regulation without regard to public benefits. Balanced economics don't work that way: both the costs and the benefits of protecting Americans' health and environment must be given equal weight. Obama's move today will help those public interest groups seeking smarter stronger protections, and will help lead to a fairer fight in the regulatory arena.

[\*\*The Institute for Policy Integrity\*\*](#) at New York University School of Law is a non-partisan think-tank using economics and law to protect the environment, public health, and consumers.

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For interviews with Dean Revesz or Michael Livermore call 212-998-6085 or email [ednai@nyu.edu](mailto:ednai@nyu.edu).

For an electronic copy of this statement, [click here](#).

Links for more information on Policy Integrity's work on regulatory review:

["Scrutinizing Inaction"](#) (at Huffington Post)

[Fixing Regulatory Review: Recommendations for the Next Administration](#)

[The Cost-Benefit Compass: Navigating the Perfect Storm of Economic, Environmental, and Energy Challenges](#)

[Retaking Rationality: How Cost-Benefit Analysis Can Better Protect the Environment and Our Health](#)  
(Oxford University Press, 2008)