Institute for Policy Integrity
New York University School of Law

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American Environmental Law Experts Speak At University of Brazil Conference

Discuss Brazil's use of economic analysis for stronger environmental protection.

RIO DE JANEIRO--Today, two environmental law experts delivered addresses at the University of Brazilia International Seminar, "Cost-Benefit Analysis and Efficiency in Public Policy. Conceptual and Operational Aspects."

The experts from the Institute for Policy Integrity at New York University School of Law were included in the two-day program focusing on the use of economic analysis in areas such as transportation, environment and agriculture.

Michael Livermore, Policy Integrity's executive director delivered remarks based on his book, "Retaking Rationality," co-authored with Richard Revesz, the dean of NYU School of Law. Focused on the ways cost-benefit analysis can be used to support stronger environmental protections, the book, as well as Livermore's comments at today's seminar, show that the regulatory process can often suppress the economic benefits and inflate the economic costs of regulating but that this needn't be the case.

"Environmentalists in Brazil can help to even out the scales of cost-benefit analysis. To achieve regulations that protect this nation's rich environment, the economic pros and cons of those protections must be weighed evenly, without bias. I hope our remarks today will give some insight into how economics can be marshaled to promote environmental regulations."

Gonzalo Moyano, a legal fellow with Policy Integrity, led a discussion on the institutional challenges of the adoption of cost-benefit analysis in developing countries. By reflecting on the role of

the Office of Management and Budget in the U.S., Moyano presented insights on how regulatory impact analysis can be an effective tool to design better regulations in the developing world.

About his remarks, Moyano said, "by incorporating an unbiased economic analysis into their regulatory processes, developing nations can decide how best to protect their natural resources in ways that get the maximum benefit at the smallest cost. Often, it is the case that regulating provides more benefits than not."

The two-day seminar, organized by the University of Brasilia, through several of its programs and departments, sought to evaluate the methods and procedures in public policy choices particularly concerning cost-benefit analysis and its use in government decisionmaking. The event brought together over two hundred government officials, academics and students.

The Institute for Policy Integrity at New York University School of Law is a non-partisan think-tank that works with advocacy organizations and governments to use economics and law to protect the environment, public health, and consumers. In the United States and across the globe, Policy Integrity projects bring economics to bear on issues like climate change and net neutrality.

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For more information on "Retaking Rationality," click here.