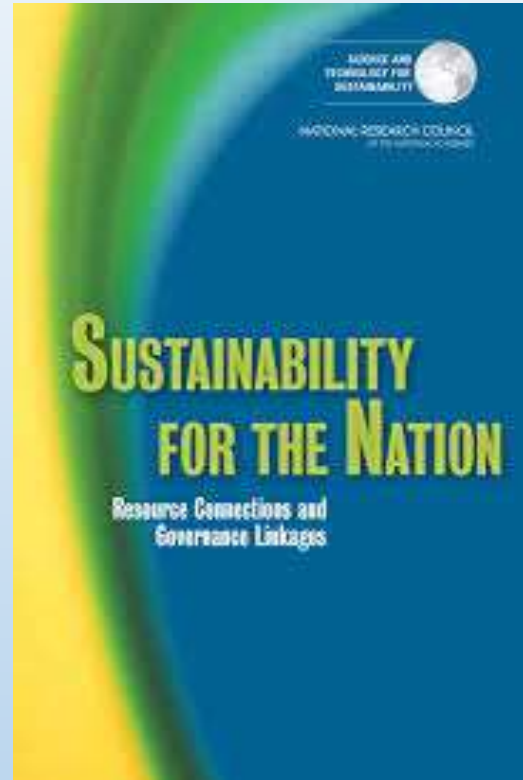


# STGWG Spring Meeting

## Sustainability for the Nation

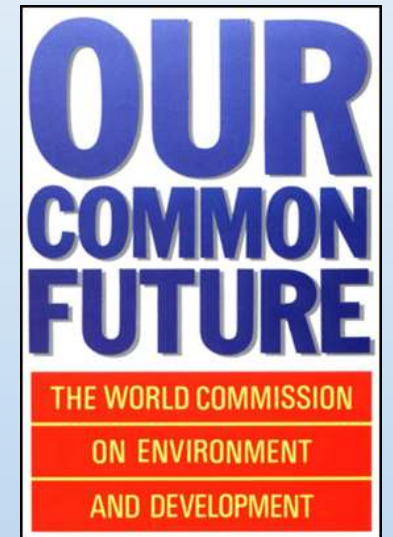


Alan D. Hecht

Director of Sustainable Development  
Office of Research and Development/EPA

# DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY

- Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- “Sustainable development is a **process of change** in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations.”
- Sustainability aims to **improve long term conditions** rather than just sustain or maintaining current conditions.



# What Does Sustainability Mean to EPA?

Sustainability isn't part of our work – **it's a guiding influence for all of our work.** [WWW.EPA.gov/sustainability](http://WWW.EPA.gov/sustainability).

- 21<sup>st</sup> century **APPROACH** to environmental management
- It is both a **GOAL and PROCESS** to achieve maximum benefits of decisions.
- It recognizes the **NEXUS** of land-air-water actions and the need for **SYSTEMS THINKING and RESILIENT OUTCOMES.**
- It aims to **IMPROVE** long term conditions rather than just sustain or maintaining current conditions. (Response to megatrends).
- Enhances emphasis on social well being and environmental justice







# Evolving EPA Roles and Responsibilities

## Regulations, Codes, Conducts, Collaborations

Traditional role of protecting human health and the environment



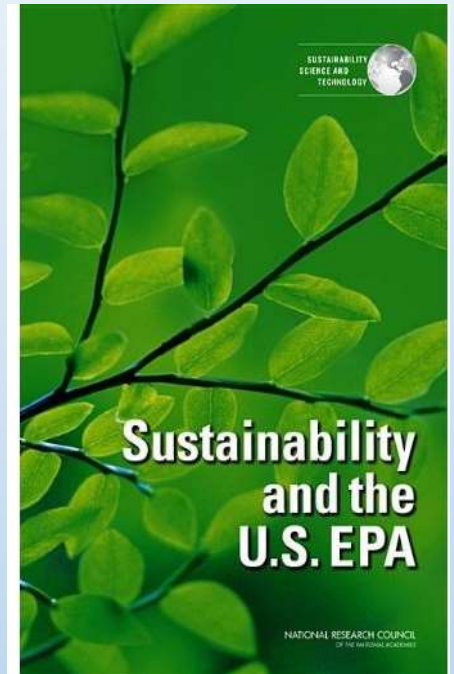
Ensure homeland security/protect infrastructure and natural systems



Develop tools and indicators for building a resilient and sustainable society

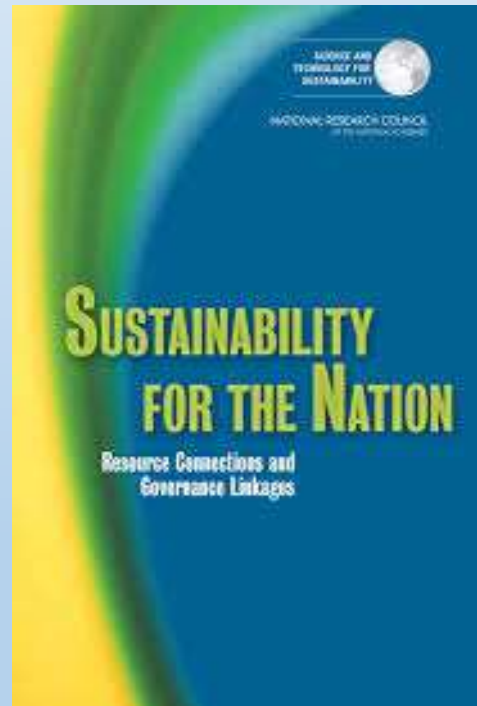
# NAS Recommendations to EPA Sustainability NRC Green Book—2011

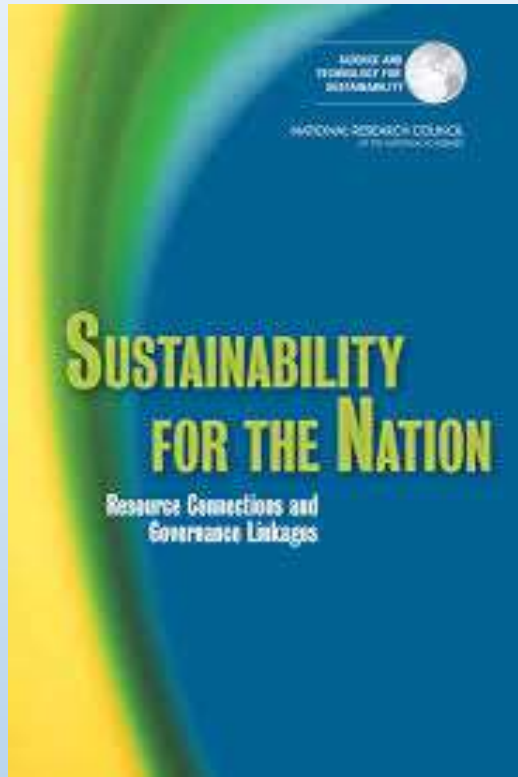
- Go beyond the risk paradigm and adopt a sustainability framework, assessing economic, social, and environmental impacts.
- Advance system science and develop decision support tools
- Identify future problems and consider solutions across local and regional communities.
- Train current workforce on sustainability and hire multidisciplinary professionals.
- Engage in collaboration across public, private and NGO sectors.



# NAS Study, 2013: “Sustainability for the Nation”

“A National Sustainability Policy should be developed that will provide clear guidance to the executive agencies on addressing governance linkages on complex sustainability problems and inform national policy on sustainability.”





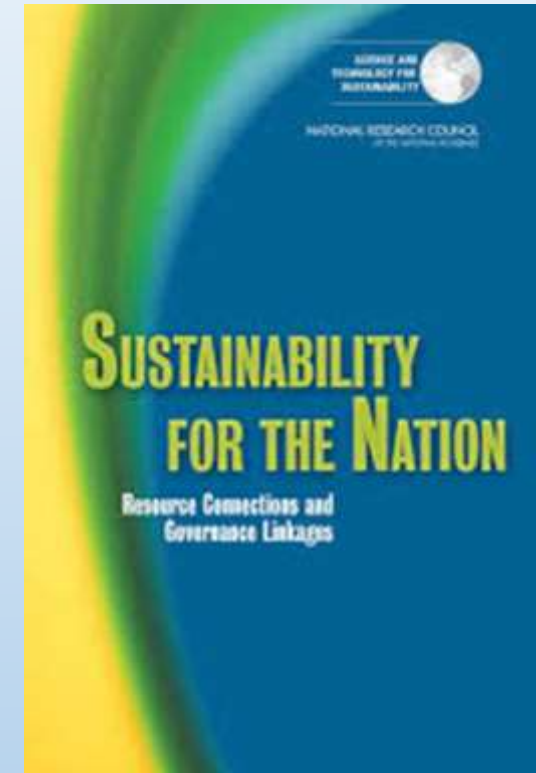
# High Priority Sustainability Challenges

- Connections among energy, food, and water
- Diverse and healthy ecosystems
- Enhancing the resilience of communities to extreme events
- Human health and well-being



# 4

Success on sustainability issues in the federal government is dependent on several key factors: engaging stakeholders throughout the process; including and integrating environmental, economic, and social dimensions; using a strong science base and processes that link science and decision making; and reaching stakeholder agreement on the nature of important connections



# EPA Strategic Plan 2014-2018

## GOALS

1. Addressing Climate Change and Improving Air Quality
2. Protecting American Waters
3. Cleaning up communities and advancing sustainable development
4. Ensuring safety of chemical and preventing pollution
5. Protecting human health and the environment by enforcing laws and ensuring compliance

## Cross Cutting Strategies

- Working toward a sustainable future
- Working to make a visible difference in communities
- Launching new era of state, tribal, local and international partnerships
- Enhancing EPA as a high performance agency

# Making Sustainability Operational

- Enhance public understanding and support.
- Coordinate across federal agencies/Improve capability of work force for cross-office collaboration and coordination.
- Promote innovation in science and technology and advance application of decision support tools
- Adopt systems approach to decision making
- Create effective business and government collaborations and partnerships.
- Be flexible and innovative within existing legal framework.
- Anticipate and respond to mega-trends