

Natural Resource Policy: guide to library resources

The guide for this course is linked under the “Courses” tab on the library subject page for POLITICS (<http://potsdam.libguides.com/politics>) – or directly at:

<http://potsdam.libguides.com/Politics Natural Resources>

- Begin by consulting one or more of the reference books (either online or in paper in the Crumb Reference Area) to get some background on your topic – or to help you choose a topic.
- Determine whether the issue you are studying was played out at the federal level, or state/local level.

Federal Issues:

- Finding the key legislation will be an essential first step. Look for:

The name of the act. Ex.: National Environmental Policy Act

The Public Law (P.L. or Pub. L #) – Ex.: Pub. L. 96-539. Public Laws are online at GPO Access beginning with the 104th Congress (1995-96)

The Statutes at Large reference. Ex.: 61 Stat. 190. *Statutes at Large* are in paper at KF 50 for the years 1953-2007. This is the official text of the law.

U.S. Code references. Ex.: 42 U.S.C. 6991b(h)(2). *US Code* is in paper at Ref. KF62 2006 .A2; and also available in *LexisNexis Academic* as part of *US Code Service*. Search by subject term or code title – for ex. 42 USCS 6991

- Documents were produced as the legislation was making its way through Congress. There are several ways of searching for these documents – as described on the guide. What search method work best depends on the time period that you are focusing on. Recent laws are well-covered in online sources, but pre-1980 laws may require use of printed search tools. The documents you are looking for could include:

“Hearings” before Congressional Committees. Viewpoints of stakeholders are recorded in these documents.

“Reports” of Committees. These documents contain the provisions of the bill and other material. A “conference report” is an agreement on legislation that is negotiated between the House and Senate via conference committees. Ex.: S.Rept #, or H.Rept. #.

(We have only selected committee hearing and reports in paper. It may be necessary to request those you need through interlibrary loan.)

The *Congressional Record* is a daily publication of the action on the floor of Congress. We have the complete Cong. Rec. in paper until 1976, and a paper index until 2002 at J11.R5. It is online at *FDsys* from 1994 to the present. (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/search/home.action>), and there is an index online for 1983-present (but it does not link to full-text) at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=CREC>

- Regulations issued or proposed by the agency or agencies administering the law are published in the Federal Register (F.R.), codified in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (C.F.R.), and may also be posted on the agency website.
- You may encounter court cases relating to the law. Ex.: *Ruckelshaus v. Monsanto Co.* 467 U.S. 986 (1984). Supreme Court cases are easily obtainable, online or in paper. *LexisNexis* is also a good source for federal cases, and regulations. Click “US Legal” and look for “Federal and State Cases.”

State/Local Issues

LexisNexis Academic has fairly good coverage of recent state statutes and regulations. Go to “US Legal / State Statutes, Codes & Regulations” Paper copies of the *Laws of New York* are in the stacks at KFN 5025.A23 for the years 1979-2008. Another useful legislative work is the *Summary of Legislation* in paper at KFN 5005.R4 for the years 1976-2007.

To search deeper into NY State government publications – use the resources listed on the NYS Government page on our web site, under “Online Resources”.

General Advice

- News sources from when the bill was being considered could help you understand the pressures that acted on the process of enacting the law. Some news sources are available online as far back as 1970. Earlier news reports can be located using printed indexes which lead to microfilm of the actual newspapers. Especially important is the *New York Times*.
- Journal articles and law review articles will provide more in-depth analysis. There are several databases that provide access to these resources. *LexisNexis* has a section of law reviews, for example.
- Books in our collection, as well as books you obtain via interlibrary loan, may be useful for getting historical perspective on the issues and focused analysis of the politics. When searching library catalogs, including *WorldCat*, the phrase “law and legislation” is often used as a subject heading.
- Organizations may have produced position statements on the issues you are researching. These could include public interest groups such as environmental organizations, or trade and industry associations.
- *CIS* (Congressional Information Service) is an excellent source of information on U.S. legislation and the documents associated with committee work. We have *CIS* for the years 1970-1993 in the stacks at KF 49.C62.