

## **Assessing China's Official Response to Environmental Health Risks**

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China is facing major environmental problems and is in the midst of a significant reevaluation of its response to these challenges. The Chinese leadership has gradually awakened to the tensions between economic growth and the environment, but the government's response has been focused primarily on China's environmental agencies. The impact on human health of China's emerging environmental crisis has received scant administrative attention by Chinese officials.

The paper will focus on the emerging challenge of environmental health in China, and the organization and impact of the Chinese government's response. The paper will examine how environmental health risks are understood and handled within Chinese government agencies at central and local levels, with attention to uncoordinated bureaucratic responses as well as the disconnect between central and local governments. We will discuss efforts at the national level to develop more effective mechanisms for inter-agency collaboration between environment and health bureaucracies. We will also include one case study on this topic at the provincial level. We will further assess the degree to which the Chinese government is looking to international agencies to help tackle its mounting environmental health problems, and identify opportunities for enhanced international collaboration.

Highlighting the gap between the intensifying challenge and existing governmental programs, the paper calls for increased transparency and accountability, particularly among local officials, and better environmental governance. Ultimately, the paper concludes by stressing the areas in which the U.S. government can make a positive impact on improving the environmental and public health record in China.