

## HISTORY OF THE BOARD

The Board on Environmental Change and Society (BECS) is successor to the Committee on the Human Dimensions of Global Change (CHDGC), a standing committee established in 1989. The CHDGC helped guide research in the United States on the interactions between human activity and global environmental change, and was responsible for 18 NAS reports on these topics. It provided a forum to link the social and natural sciences, and working in conjunction with other units of the National Research Council, the committee served as a source of broad scientific expertise and judgment for setting the agenda for research on coupled human-environment interactions. BECS will continue to serve in this way, but the breadth of the issues that it may consider has been expanded to address emerging scientific and government concerns.



Albert Einstein Memorial Statue, Copyright 1978 by Robert Berks. Photograph by Alex Jamison. The statue, located on the grounds of the historic National Academy of Sciences building at 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW in Washington, DC, is a favorite spot for tourists.

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## **BOARD ON ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND SOCIETY**

Major transitions are on the horizon for the human relationship to the global environment. Human societies themselves are being transformed, and these changes are interacting with and even accelerating environmental change. There is much debate about how to achieve long-term environmental sustainability and cope with unavoidable environmental impacts and dislocations. The Board on Environmental Change and Society fosters and evaluates research on coupled human-environment systems to help meet the challenges of adapting to environmental change, limiting degradation of the environment, and working toward a sustainable future. By making behavioral, social, economic, and decision sciences research accessible to environmental policy and by integrating social and environmental research, the Board seeks to anticipate vulnerabilities and damaging exposures, to inform efforts to maintain human well-being in the face of environmental change, as well as to enlighten transitions with an understanding of their likely intended and unintended consequences for sustainability.

The Board comprises expertise in

- Decision sciences, including both analysis and decision-support;
- Socio-ecological interactions, including resilience of human communities;
- Economic policy and analysis, including economic drivers, impacts and responses, and valuation of environmental outcomes;
- Climate, biophysical and biogeochemical processes, and ecology;
- Energy and natural resource management;
- Public and environmental health policy;
- Environmental governance, including risk analysis and governance; and
- National and international sustainable development.

### **Areas of Project Development**

Coupled human-environment systems

Social and behavioral influences in innovation and technology deployment

Vulnerability, adaptation, and resilience to environmental change

Environmental policy evaluation

Risk and governance

Decision support

### **Selected Recent Reports**

Describing Socioeconomic Futures for Climate Change Research and Assessment

Facilitating Climate Change Responses

Informing Decisions in a Changing Climate

Public Participation in Environmental Assessment and Decision Making

New Directions in Vulnerability, Adaptation, and Impacts Assessment

Putting People on the Map: Protecting Confidentiality with Linked Social-Spatial Data

Decision Making for the Environment: Social and Behavioral Science Research Priorities

Population, Land Use, and Environment: Research Directions

The Drama of the Commons

New Tools for Environmental Protection: Education, Information, and Voluntary Measures

People and Pixels: Linking Remote Sensing and Social Science

Environmentally Significant Consumption: Research Directions

