**Sample Affirmative Case**

**Intro**: “Protecting the health and safety of all Americans doesn’t have to come at the expense of our economy’s bottom line. And creating thriving companies and new jobs doesn’t have to come at the expense of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, or the natural landscape in which we live. We can, and indeed must, have both.” It is because I agree with former President Bill Clinton that I must affirm the resolution, which states**, Resolved: “A government's obligation to protect the environment ought to take precedence over its obligation to promote economic development.”**

**Observation 1: Definitions**:

I will now clarify the terms of the debate by offering up the following definitions found in Black’s Law Dictionary, Fifth Edition.

**a) Environment**: the condition of the air, water, soil, plants, animals, and natural surroundings.

**b) Economic Development/Growth** The process by which a country increases its ability to produce goods and services.

**c) Governmental obligation**: A governing body or organization that is bound by a social, legal or moral tie.

**d) Precedence**: the fact or state of priority. Meaning - that one must come before the other.

**Observation 2: Value and Criterion.**

**Value:** The supreme value in which to weigh the round is that of **Social Welfare**. By providing the best possible outcome for a society, a government is fulfilling its duty to its citizens to provide the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.

**Criterion:** The only way to uphold the value of Social Welfare is the standard of **Governmental Legitimacy**. This can be defined as a government conforming to all moral codes and providing the best moral outcome for a society. Only through a government using its own hegemony can a people be protected to the fullest moral extent.

**Contention 1: Damages to the environment are permanent, the economy can be fixed.**

**a)** Former President Theodore Roosevelt once stated, “I do not intend that our natural resources shall be exploited by the few against the interests of the many.” In the December/January ’03-’04 publishing of Mother Earth News, it stated that “Climate change threatens the global economy and that environmental protection should come first. Climate change is a major issue that is not getting the attention it deserves from most governments, particularly that of the U.S., the country responsible for a quarter of all the world’s carbon emissions. Just as governments in Africa watched HIV infection rates rise and did little about it, the U.S. is watching atmospheric CO2 levels rise and doing little to check the increase.” Furthermore, many examples of this are quite apparent such: the of the Aral Sea, the burning rain forests in Indonesia, the collapse of the Canadian cod fishery, the melting of the glaciers that supply Andean cities with water, the dust bowl forming in northwestern China and the depletion of the U.S. Great Plains Aquifer. The impacts of all of these are quite apparent that when a government puts the economy above the environment, the environment will fail which in turn will drag the economy down with it along with the society.

**Contention 2: The environment is the basis of our society.**

**a) Society must realize that when it harms the environment, those harms cannot be undone.** However, when it harms the economy, it can fix that. As humans continue to expand into the world, they are constantly destroying millions of hectares of trees and other such natural resources that are vital to life, and the economy. Without these resources, life would not exist. China right now is a prime example of seeking economic development first and outstripping the environment. Lester Brown puts it bluntly, “In the deteriorating relationship between the global economy and the Earth’s ecosystem, China is on the leading edge. More than one billion people and 400 million cattle, sheep and goats weigh heavily on the land. China’s expanding ecological deficits are converging to create a dust bowl of historic dimensions, with little vegetation remaining in parts of northern and western China.” The sole impact is, it is only a matter of time before China runs out of food completely, and then it will have to rely on its economy to sustain it. However, with nothing to support the economy, the reserves of money will run dry and China will be just a piece of land. This impact is supreme because of the fact that you have to protect your environment in order to sustain life within a country.

**b) As the economy presses forward, it is using more resources than ever before.** With this constant consumption, the world’s people will have nowhere to live. According to Portney/Haas in Current Issues in Natural Resource Policy, 1999, “the results [of depletion] are… alarming, indicating that within the next 100 years the world will run out of copper, lead, nickel, tin, zinc, and a host of other mineral commodities.” Ted Trainer also notes that “Only one-fifth of the world’s people live in rich countries, but we are using up about four-fifths of the worlds annual resource output, at a per capita rate seventeen times that enjoyed by half the world’s people.” Furthermore, he states in his book Developed to: Rethinking Third World Development, “this economy is only healthy if the amount of producing and the consuming going on constantly increases.” The impacts of this analysis are four fold. First, that by destroying the metals and minerals listed, we will be the economy. Some examples are copper is used primarily in the electrical trade to make wire and piping and used to make pennies, tin is used in the automotive industry, which is the nation’s largest industry. Second, by destroying the natural resources, we are taking away the biodiversity of the environment which may one day lead to the cure for a virus of today or tomorrow. By taking away a possible cure for a disease, you are denying the right for someone to live. This action is immoral; therefore, we must protect the environment before the economy in order to save lives. Thirdly, with the economy always expanding to stay with the status quo, there will never be an end to expansion. The status quo will continue to rise until there is no more environment left to live in.

**Contention 3: A government’s sole obligation is to the welfare of its people first.** Therefore, we must reduce the industry and economy in order to produce the best possible welfare for a society. Fourthly, many problems are present in today’s society. By ignoring the environment, those problems will only increase. When the economy uses more resources than is needed, it will be taking away those resources that could be used in other countries. According to Lester R. Brown, founder of WorldWatch Institute, in his book, “Growing…Growing…Gone?” he states that, “Unfortunately, since September 11, 2001, political leaders, diplomats and the media worldwide have been preoccupied with ism and, more recently, the invasion of Iraq. Terrorism is certainly a matter of concern, but if it diverts our attention from the environmental trends undermining our future until it is too late to reverse them, Osama Bin Laden and his followers will have achieved their goal in ways they could not have imagined.” The impacts of this analysis are twofold. First, since we are the environment off at an alarming rate by neglecting it, we will find ourselves increasingly in a world without a place to live. Resources will become scarce and the countries will start to stake a claim to these limiting resources. These claims will be disputed until the tensions are so great that all the countries in the world will eventually take sides and World War III will start. Secondly, humanity’s demands of the earth have multiplied over the last half-century as our members have increased, rising from 2.5 billion in 1950 to 6.1 billion in 2000. In fact, human population grew more over the past 50 years than it did during the preceding 4 million years since we emerged as a distinct species. By looking to protect the environment before the economy, we can guarantee that there will be an Earth to live on for many years to come.

**Conclusion:** To conclude, by not putting the environment in the for-front of the minds of the governments, the subsequent societies will suffer even more so than if the environment had been attended to. Without the environment, there can be no life. It is for all these reasons that I urge an affirmative ballot. I now stand open for CX and points of clarification.