Activists Group: You are an Environmentalist with an American Climate-Change Organization

Your Background and Biography

You are the only child of globe-trotting parents who valued the experiences of international travel more than anything else. When you were growing up, every summer brought a new trip across the seas, a new family adventure. However, when you were 23, your parents tragically died. Feeling compelled to go on as they would have wanted but questioning your current direction, you grieved their loss by revisiting places you traveled together over the years. You revisited Alaskan glaciers, which have regressed dramatically in the matter of a decade. In the midst of your mourning you found your calling—trying to stop climate change.

You started by taking a job as a climate educator with a nongovernmental organization in the United States that teaches local activists and citizens about climate change. You taught people all over the country, repeating a simple lesson: climate change is real, it is happening now, humans are causing it, and we can solve it.

A key part of solving climate change is dramatically expanding clean energy systems, many of which depend on rare earth elements. Rare earths—currently found in electric car motors, offshore wind turbines, and energy-efficient light bulbs—will help lead the economy away from greenhouse gas–emitting fossil fuels toward a sustainable future. However, the current production process for rare earth metals is energy intensive, inefficient, and associated with significant pollution and radioactive waste. So your employer has asked you to represent the needs of the climate in this conference to establish a Sustainability Seal for rare earth production.

You want to make sure there will be a stable supply of rare earth metals that is adequate to meet the needs of the expanding clean energy industry around the world. You will argue that the Sustainability Seal should encourage techniques that minimize fossil-fuel use throughout all steps of production, from mining and manufacturing to distributing and using products. While you are convinced the world needs rare earth metals to support clean energy systems and help keep the global climate system stable, you also support your fellow activists who are concerned about the local impacts produced by rare earth mining and refining.

Your Mission
Your goal at this hearing is to convince the Stewardship Council to include the Activists Group’s recommendations in its final Sustainability Seal guiding values. To make this argument effectively, you must do the following:

- Complete the assigned readings listed at the bottom of this page.
- Work closely with the other members of your group to develop clear answers to the Stewardship Council’s questions.
- Use as much specific information as possible to develop strong arguments for your position that protecting the environment and promoting human well-being (physical and economical) are critical to establishing a sustainable, ethical rare earth elements industry.
- Read as much as you can about your position and the positions of the other groups.
- Complete written reflections on your character, interest group, and readings as assigned.

**Your Victory Objectives**

- **You will receive 10 points** if the Stewards select your group’s proposal as the final Sustainability Seal guiding values.
- The Stewards will rank the interest groups by how well their goals are represented in the final Sustainability Seal guiding values. **You will receive between 1 and 4 points** based on how the Activists Group is ranked and how well the Sustainability Seal guiding values reflect your goals.

**SOURCES**

**Group Resources**

- Activists Case Study: “[Protecting Health and the Environment in an Age of Global Trade](#)”

**Individual Sources**