Consumers Group: You are the CEO of an Ethical Consumer Electronics Manufacturing Firm

Your Background and Biography

You have always been interested in how things work. Throughout your childhood you took things apart to see how they were built. Your curiosity extended to people and cultures, and you explored how different people interact with the places where they live.

In college you specialized in industrial design and also took a few classes focused on socially responsible design and user experience. After graduating you sought out projects and work at companies that valued design as an open, collaborative process and promoted ethical and sustainable business practices. You maintained an interest in the mechanics of how things work, and you eventually became creative director at a company whose mission was to manufacture consumer electronics in ways that were open, fair, and inclusive.

Your company actually began as an awareness campaign to help consumers understand the exploitation of workers who produced the raw materials for electronics. Then you and your colleagues decided to try to make smartphones yourselves using ethically sourced materials. Your phones are designed with separate components that can be easily replaced or upgraded without throwing away the whole phone. Recycled materials already make up much of your phones. The people who assemble the phones are paid fair wages and get bonuses for meeting social goals rather than for building the most phones. Ethics and sustainability are the main selling points for your company’s smartphone.

In this negotiation you want the Sustainability Seal to include guiding values that address not just the environmental impact but also the social and economic impacts of production. The Sustainability Seal must encourage fair wages, the creation of conditions beneficial for society in areas affected by rare earth production, and environmentally friendly ways of producing rare earths. You especially hope the Sustainability Seal will promote ways to stimulate recycling rare earths from electronic waste.

Your Mission
Your goal at this hearing is to convince the Stewardship Council to include the Consumers 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 sustainable rare earth production must ensure the availability of products that meet society’s needs, while producing them in ways that are ethically and environmentally acceptable to a range of purchasers.
- 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 Consumers Group is ranked and how well the Sustainability Seal guiding values reflect your goals.

**SOURCES**

**Group Sources**

- Consumers Case Study: “Can Consumer Choices Make Rare Earth Production More Sustainable?”

**Individual Sources**