Consumers Group: You are a Famous Inventor

Your Background and Biography

You are one of the richest people in the world, with a public profile (and an ego) to match. You are the kind of celebrity entrepreneur that business magazines call “influential” and “innovative.”

You made your first billion dollars in the dotcom boom at the turn of the millennium. Ever since, you have started up companies that try to disrupt established ways of doing things. You have a plan to end traffic jams by building automated conveyors that would move through dedicated tunnels. (“He’s invented the subway!” your critics snicker.) But you are confident in your abilities as a genius inventor, just like the famously misunderstood scientist and inventor whose name you borrowed for your car company.

You are involved in the rare earth economy because one of your companies manufactures electric vehicles. You initially chose an induction motor (which does not use rare earth magnets) for your first successful model of electric car, which went on sale shortly after the 2010 crisis drove rare earth prices upward. But you changed course a few years later, after the price of rare earth metals had sunk again. Switching from an induction motor to a permanent magnet motor will give your cars longer range, especially in the stop-and-go of city driving. Now it looks like your company is going to be part of the rare earths industry for a long time.

When you heard about these negotiations, you demanded to participate. The Stewards grumbled but agreed. (Lots of people seem to grumble and then agree with you.) After all, you can generate fawning media coverage. You also insisted on being placed with the Consumers group. While you are actually a manufacturer, your car company sells directly to consumers; so you are confident you know what consumers want.

In the negotiations you want to make sure that the supply of rare earths does not get restricted. Who knows what incredible technologies you could make in the future with these amazing metals? You also want a Sustainability Seal that is easy for manufacturers to obtain. You are sure that customers will be proud to tell everyone their high-performance car is made of sustainable materials.

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**