

THE CASE OF RARE EARTH ELEMENTS



Manufacturers Group: You are a Vice President for Environmental and Social Initiatives at a Consumer Electronics Manufacturer

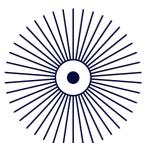
Your Background and Biography

Though you were born in Philadelphia, you grew up in New Orleans and eventually attended Tulane University, where you studied chemical engineering. While many of your peers went on to work for the big oil companies and petrochemical factories in Louisiana, you decided to stay on at Tulane for your master's degree.

During your studies you heard about the ongoing controversy about abandoned toxic waste at Love Canal, near Buffalo, New York. Residential neighborhoods were being poisoned by seeping chemicals that had for decades been dumped nearby. The public attention and heavy media coverage led to a new law in 1980, creating the "Superfund" program managed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to clean up contaminated sites. After graduation you went to work for the EPA directly, managing cleanup at Superfund sites along the East Coast. Soon the governor of New Jersey asked you to lead the state's Department of Environmental Protection, and not long after that the president of the United States picked you to lead the EPA.

When a new president was elected, you left your position at the EPA in order to lead the environmental and social initiatives at one of the world's largest and most celebrated technology companies. It's a place where every step and misstep you take attracts media attention. The company relies on rare earths for its best-selling consumer electronics products. Your aim is to use the company's purchasing dollars and public influence to put environmental justice and protecting the natural world on the international business agenda, but your boss, the CEO, just wants to make sure the company doesn't get rocked by big protests or boycott threats.

In negotiations you want a clear, credible process your company can use. The company relies on rare earths for its best-selling consumer electronics products and needs a steady supply of them. Your company is comfortable paying a premium for rare earth metals in exchange for being able to advertise itself as an environmental leader. Your goal is to produce a credible Sustainability Seal that activists and consumers can trust is making rare earth production more environmentally sustainable and less toxic.



Your Mission

Your goal at this hearing is to convince the Stewardship Council to include the Manufacturers 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 changing consumer demands require businesses to pursue creative problem solving and innovation in resolving the pressing issues caused by rare earth element mining, supply chains, and manufacturing.
- 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 Manufacturers Group is ranked and how well the Sustainability Seal guiding values reflect your goals.

SOURCES

Group Sources

- Manufacturers Case Study: ["Using the Rare Earth Elements"](#)
- Ma, Alexandra. ["From iPhones to Fighter Jets: Here's a List of American Products That Could Be Affected If China Banned Rare-Earth Metal Exports to the US as a Trade-War Weapon."](#) *Business Insider*, May 21, 2019.

Individual Sources

- Griffin, Andrew. ["Apple Environment Head Lisa Jackson on Its Greener New iPhone—and the Work It Still Has to Do."](#) *Independent*, October 10, 2019.
- Liu, Hongqiao. ["Apple and Rare Earth Recycling."](#) *China Water Risk*, September 18, 2017.



- Stone, Maddie. ["Behind the Hype of Apple's Plan to End Mining."](#) *Earther: Gizmodo*, March 6, 2019.

