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## **CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: ROLE OF PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Citizens are one of a nation's greatest resources for enforcing environmental laws and regulations. They know the country's land and natural attributes more intimately than a government ever will. Their number makes them more pervasive than the largest government agency. And because citizens work, play, and travel in the environment, each has a personal stake in its beauty, health, and permanence. Citizens are omnipresent, motivated, and uniquely interested in environmental quality.

A bird-watcher walking in the woods sees chemical waste flowing through a stream, traces the source to a neighboring factory, and alerts government agencies to the factory's violation of its emissions discharge permit. A local citizen group in a small town near a coal mine suggests to a state mining agency practical ways, based on the citizens' own observations of the mine in operation, of making environmental standards for mines easier to administer and enforce. A city resident notices that municipal buses are emitting noxious fumes, sues the bus company, and wins a court order requiring the company to place pollution control devices in the bus exhaust systems. These are just a few examples of the many and varied influences citizens can have on the process of environmental enforcement.

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