

Scientia Canadensis

Canadian Journal of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine
Revue canadienne d'histoire des sciences, des techniques et de la médecine

Scientia
Canadensis

Risky Business: Canada's Changing Science-Based Policy and Regulatory Regime. Edited by Bruce G. Doern and Ted Reed.
(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. 385 p. ISBN 0-8020-4481-6 \$60.00 hb. ISBN 0-8020-8262-9 \$24.95 pb.)

Philip Enros

Volume 25, 2001

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/800438ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/800438ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

CSTHA/AHSTC

ISSN

0829-2507 (print)

1918-7750 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Enros, P. (2001). Review of [*Risky Business: Canada's Changing Science-Based Policy and Regulatory Regime*. Edited by Bruce G. Doern and Ted Reed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. 385 p. ISBN 0-8020-4481-6 \$60.00 hb. ISBN 0-8020-8262-9 \$24.95 pb.)]. *Scientia Canadensis*, 25, 96–97.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/800438ar>

Copyright © Canadian Science and Technology Historical Association /
Association pour l'histoire de la science et de la technologie au Canada, 2003

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

Érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

Risky Business: Canada's Changing Science-Based Policy and Regulatory Regime. Edited by Bruce G. Doern and Ted Reed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. 385 p. ISBN 0-8020-4481-6 \$60.00 hb. ISBN 0-8020-8262-9 \$24.95 pb.)

Those interested in the history of science and technology in Canada are very cognizant of the important role the federal government has played in the advancement and application of knowledge in the country, especially in the development of its natural resources and the building up of what is today popularly known as the "national system of innovation." Much well less articulated, however, is the fundamental role that federal science and technology plays in the development of government policy and regulations. *Risky Business* examines that science-based policy and regulatory regime, mostly focusing on events of the 1990s.

The book is a collection of essays and case studies, most of which were given as presentations at a conference held in Ottawa in October 1998. That year saw sustained media attention on a series of gaps between science and policy in the federal government. Newspaper headlines such as "Bureaucrats sabotage scientists," "Science czar 'a good idea'," "Industry policing itself is like wolf minding sheep," and "Health Canada unsafe: scientist" abounded, as did stories and interviews on radio and television. Public trust in the government's use of science to protect their health and well-being was severely eroded.

Nine of the book's 15 chapters are devoted to case studies of various controversies (the regulatory review of bovine growth hormone, food safety regimes and a 1998 outbreak of cyclospora, eco-labelling, and mad cow disease—the lone foreign case study) or of regulatory agencies (the Therapeutic Products Programme, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and Environment Canada). Another four chapters are given over to broader examinations of the

role of federal science and technology in serving the public interest, the relation between science and policy in the field of risk management, new approaches for science-based regulation, and the challenges of coordinating federal science and technology policy. Bruce Doern and Ted Reed round out the book with very useful introductory and concluding chapters.

Risky Business is an excellent overview of the use of science and technology in policy development and regulatory work. Along the way readers are introduced to the mandates, structure and recent history of the principal regulatory agencies and to the variety of issues involved in science-based regulation (e.g. levels of investment in government science for regulatory work, changing paradigms of risk, transparency and the independence of science, and the impact of globalization). While not a work of history, this book should inspire and inform historical studies of what is probably the most significant role science and technology plays in modern governance.

PHILIP ENROS

Biographical Note: Philip Enros has published articles in *Scientia Canadensis* on science policy and industry. With Michael R. Farley, he has authored the report *University Offices for Technology Transfer: Toward the Service University* (Ottawa: Science Council of Canada, 1986). Address: Science Policy Branch, Environment Canada, 351 St-Joseph Blvd., 7th Floor, Hull (Québec) K1A 0H3, Canada.