Justice Kennedy and the Environment: Property, States' Rights, and a Persistent Search for Nexus

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JUSTICE KENNEDY AND THE ENVIRONMENT: PROPERTY, STATES' RIGHTS, AND A PERSISTENT SEARCH FOR NEXUS

Michael C. Blumm* & Sherry L. Bosse**

Abstract: Justice Anthony Kennedy, now clearly the pivot of the Roberts Court, is the Court's crucial voice in environmental law cases. Kennedy's central role was never more evident than in the two most celebrated environmental cases of the last few years, Kelo v. City of New London and Rapanos v. United States, as he supplied the critical vote in both. Kennedy has in fact been the needle of the Supreme Court's environmental law compass since his nomination in 1988. Although he wrote surprisingly few environmental law opinions over his first eighteen years on the Court, Kennedy was in the majority an astonishing ninety-six percent of the time (as compared to his generic record of being in the majority slightly over sixty percent of the time). This article examines Kennedy's environmental law record on the Court, as well as his preceding thirteen years on the Ninth Circuit. The article evaluates all of the environmental law cases in which he wrote an opinion over those three decades and catalogues his voting record in all Supreme Court cases in which he participated. One striking measure of Kennedy's influence is that he has written just one environmental dissent while on the Court, and that was on states' rights grounds, one of his chief priorities. We believe that Kennedy is considerably more interested in allowing trial judges to resolve cases on the basis of context than in establishing broadly-applicable doctrine. That is, he is a doctrinal minimalist. By consistently demanding a demonstrated "nexus" between doctrine and facts, he has shown an intolerance for elevating abstract philosophy over concrete justice. And, despite his unassailable devotion to states' rights, Kennedy has been quite willing to find federal preemption when it serves deregulation purposes. On the other hand, he is far from an anti-regulatory zealot, although he prefers only one level of governmental regulation. At what might be close to the mid-point in his Court career—and with his power perhaps at its zenith—Justice Kennedy is clearly not someone any litigant can ignore. We hope this article gives both environmental litigants and academics a fertile resource to till. Although Kennedy's environmental record has been sparse until lately, he may be receptive to environmental claims if they are factually well-grounded and do not conflict with his overriding concern for states' rights. The article concludes with some comparisons between Kennedy and Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes.

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* Professor of Law, Lewis and Clark Law School. This article benefited from the comments of the participants at Lewis and Clark's faculty colloquium and is dedicated to Bill Rodgers, a long-time friend, mentor, and role-model, on the occasion of his forty years of teaching environmental law. Bill has been and will continue to be an inspiration to several generations of law students, lawyers, and law professors.

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INTRODUCTION

That Justice Anthony Kennedy sits at the center of the Roberts Court is hardly a secret. After the retirement of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, Supreme Court advocates know they must aim their arguments at Kennedy, who seldom finds himself in the minority. In the


Kennedy was President Reagan's third nominee to replace Justice Lewis Powell, after the Senate rejected Robert Bork and after Douglas Ginsburg withdrew, following revelations that he used marijuana. Kennedy, who had served on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals since his appointment by President Ford in 1975, was confirmed unanimously in February 1988. Kennedy owed his appointment to a longstanding relationship with Ed Meese, Reagan's Chief of Staff and Attorney General. Kennedy graduated from Stanford University in 1958 and Harvard Law School in 1961. He then practiced law in Sacramento, where he also taught constitutional law at McGeorge School of Law and worked with Meese on several projects, including a failed initiative to cut taxes and spending that was supported by Governor Reagan. See Oyez – Anthony Kennedy, http://www.oyez.org/justices/anthony_kennedy/ (last visited June 29, 2007).

Unlike several of his colleagues on the Supreme Court, Kennedy never was a judicial clerk, entering private practice after graduation in San Francisco (1961–1963) and Sacramento (1963–1975). He taught constitutional law at McGeorge School of Law from 1965 until he was confirmed as a Supreme Court Justice in 1988. See Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute, Supreme Court Collection, http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/justices/kennedy.bio.html (last visited June 29, 2007).

A recent assessment of Kennedy's jurisprudence challenged the widespread view that Kennedy is an indecisive justice: "From the beginning, Kennedy's performance on the Court has been defined not by indecision but by self-dramatizing utopianism. He believes it is the role of the Court in general and himself in particular to align the messy reality of American life with an inspiring and highly abstracted set of ideals." Jeffrey Rosen, Supreme Leader – The Arrogance of Justice Anthony Kennedy, THE NEW REPUBLIC, June 18, 2007, at 17 (also characterizing Kennedy as "the most activist" current justice, voting "to strike down more state and federal laws combined than any of his colleagues," and labeling his jurisprudence as "a series of moralistic abstractions about liberty, equality, and dignity").

2. Of the eighty environmental decisions Justice Kennedy participated in that we considered in this study, he voted with the majority a remarkable seventy-seven times, or ninety-six percent of the time. See infra Appendix A case table. (These statistics include cases in which Justice Kennedy concurred in the judgment only, or in which he concurred in part and dissented in part.) Kennedy is a much better barometer of the Court's environmental thinking than he is in all cases: during his
environmental field (which we define to include natural resources and land use law), Justice Kennedy's pivotal role was cemented by his recent opinions in the *Kelo v. City of New London*[^3] and *Rapanos v. United States*[^4] cases, where he cast the deciding votes.[^5] While Kennedy's role in those cases has received quite a bit of commentary,[^6] there is no

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first eighteen years on the Court, Kennedy dissented a total of 354 times out of the 874 decisions in which he took part, or 40.5 percent of the time.

Justice Kennedy's record for voting with the majority in close decisions further illustrates his pivotal role at the Court's center: Kennedy voted with the majority in eighty percent of the environmental cases included in this survey that were decided with a 5-4 vote. Of the eighty cases in this survey, fifteen rested on majority opinions joined by just five members of the Court. See *infra* Appendix A case table. Kennedy voted with the dissent in just three of these decisions. See *Alaska Dep't of Envtl. Conservation v. EPA*, 540 U.S. 461 (2004), discussed *infra* notes 187-203 and accompanying text; *Pennsylvania v. Union Gas Co.*, 491 U.S. 1 (1989), discussed *infra* notes 48-50 and accompanying text; and *Idaho v. United States*, 533 U.S. 262 (2001), discussed *infra* note 100. Two additional decisions rested on Justice Kennedy's decision to provide the crucial fifth vote in the judgment only, but to write a separate concurrence in each case. See *E. Enters. v. Apfel*, 524 U.S. 498 (1998), discussed *infra* notes 101-106 and accompanying text; *Rapanos v. U.S. Army Corps of Eng'rs.*, _U.S._ (June 19, 2006), 126 S. Ct. 2208 (2006), discussed *infra* notes 240-254 and accompanying text. In another case, *Borden Ranch P'ship v. U.S. Army Corps of Eng'rs.*, 537 U.S. 99 (2002), an equally divided Court affirmed a Ninth Circuit's decision after Justice Kennedy removed himself from the case.

By the end of the first term for the Roberts Court, several commentators had recognized Kennedy's newly pivotal role, alone, at the Court's center. See Dahlia Lithwick, *A Supreme Court of One*, WASH. POST, Jul. 2, 2006, at B1 (discussing Kennedy's emergence as the swing vote on the Roberts Court and the controlling effect of his opinion in *Rapanos*); Linda Greenhouse, *Roberts Is at Court's Helm, But He Isn't Yet in Control*, N.Y. TIMES, Jul. 2, 2006, at A1 (placing Kennedy both literally and figuratively at Court's center for the regularity in which he cast the deciding vote in split decisions in the Roberts Court's first term).

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[^5]: See *Kelo*, 545 U.S. at 484 (joining the opinion Justice Stevens wrote for the 5-4 majority upholding a city's decision to use its eminent domain power to condemn developed land for an economic development project because it fulfilled the "public use" requirement of the Fifth Amendment); *infra* notes 234-237 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy's *Kelo* concurrence); *Rapanos*, 126 S. Ct. 2208, 2236 (providing the critical fifth vote for the majority when he concurred in the judgment). Kennedy refused to join Justice Scalia's plurality opinion in *Rapanos*, instead writing a separate concurrence that has more in common with Justice Stevens's dissent than with Scalia's opinion. See *infra* notes 247-254 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy's concurrence).
systematic assessment of his entire environmental record. In this article, we aim to provide that assessment by evaluating all of Justice Kennedy's environmental opinions, including those he wrote during the thirteen years he served on the Ninth Circuit before his 1988 appointment to the Supreme Court.

One remarkable aspect of the Kennedy environmental law record is just how little there is of it. In a judicial career spanning more than three decades, Justice Kennedy has written only twenty-one opinions that can be characterized as within our broad definition of environmental law: twelve majority opinions, eight concurrences, and just one dissent.

widespread backlash, discussed infra note 227.

Justice Kennedy's concurrence in Rapanos generated a considerable amount of commentary in the press. See Linda Greenhouse, Justices Divided on Protections Over Wetlands, N.Y. TIMES, Jun. 20, 2006, at A1 (suggesting Kennedy's "significant nexus" may be the standard the Army Corps of Engineers adopts if it undertakes rulemaking to define its wetlands jurisdiction); Warren Richey, High Court Splits Over Protecting Wetlands, CHRISTIAN SCI. MONITOR, Jun. 20, 2006, at USA 1 (discussing how Justice Kennedy's interpretation of "significant nexus" will allow for a greater degree of Corps' jurisdiction over wetlands than Scalia advocated in Rapanos); Charlie Tebbutt, Op-Ed, Ruling Befouls Clean Water Efforts, EUGENE REGISTER-GUARD, Aug. 20, 2006, at F1 (discussing the Rapanos decision and criticizing Kennedy's opinion for "mudd[y]ing the waters" of wetlands jurisdiction); David G. Savage, Déjà Vu Once Again: Despite New Faces on the Supreme Court, Term's Ending Is Familiar, A.B.A. J., Sept. 2006, at 12 (discussing how Justice Kennedy's seat alone at the Court's center made his vote the deciding factor in a number of prominent decisions, including Rapanos, during the Roberts Court's first term); DOJ Plan for Dual Wetlands Jurisdiction Test Wins Cautious Backing, 15 WATER POLICY REP., no. 16, Aug. 7, 2006 (discussing the U.S. Department of Justice's decision to use either Justice Kennedy's or Justice Scalia's tests to determine wetlands jurisdiction post-Rapanos); William W. Buzbee, Interpreting the Effect of the U.S. Supreme Court's Recent Decision in the Joint Cases of Rapanos v. United States and Carabell v. U.S. Army Corps of Eng'rs., Testimony Before the Committee on Senate Environment & Public Works Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Water, Aug. 1, 2006 (transcript available at http://epw.senate.gov/public/109th/Buzbee_Testimony.pdf) (describing Justice Kennedy's opinion as the "key" to the Court's ruling in Rapanos).

7. Richard Lazarus has, however, supplied a (now somewhat dated) assessment of the Supreme Court's environmental record as a whole. Richard J. Lazarus, Restoring What's Environmental About Environmental Law in the Supreme Court, 47 UCLA L. REV. 703, 812 (2000) (ratting Justice Kennedy's environmental record as 25.9 percent, prior to 1998) [hereinafter Lazarus, Environmental Law in the Supreme Court]. See also Richard J. Lazarus, Environmental Law and the Supreme Court: Three Years Later, 19 FACE ENVT'L. L. REV. 653, 673 (2002). Lazarus's analytical data has been more recently updated by Jonathan Cannon, in his cultural analysis of the Supreme Court's environmental opinions. In that study, according to Cannon, Justice Kennedy raised his environmental record to 34.1 percent. Jonathan Cannon, Environmentalism and the Supreme Court: A Cultural Analysis, 33 ECOLOGY L. Q. 363, 441 (2006) (updating the environmental scores for the justices sitting on the current Court with data from recent environmental opinions as part of a cultural analysis of the Supreme Court's environmental opinions).

8. See supra note 1.

9. Justice Kennedy has voted on many more decisions than these, but we believe those cases in
Although Justice Kennedy has been an active participant in the Supreme Court's decisions concerning alleged regulatory takings of property,\textsuperscript{10} aside from those cases, he has not seemed very invested in environmental issues, at least when they involve statutory interpretation.\textsuperscript{11} Kennedy perhaps broke this apparent disinterest in his decisive concurrence in \textit{Rapanos}, where he refused to restrict federal jurisdiction over wetlands to relatively permanent or continuously flowing bodies of water, instead opting to uphold federal jurisdiction wherever there was "a significant nexus" between a wetland and a navigable water.\textsuperscript{12}

Even if Justice Kennedy's \textit{Rapanos} opinion does not signal a change in his interest in environmental issues, he remains the indispensable vote on the Court. Richard Lazarus has pointed out that Kennedy has an which he wrote opinions are the best reflections of his judicial disposition. At any rate, analyzing his opinions is much more telling than guessing at his silences. In \textit{Eastern Enters. v. Apfel}, 524 U.S. 498, 542 (1998), Kennedy concurred in part, dissented in part. See \textit{infra} notes 101–106 and accompanying text. This article counts that decision as a concurrence.

\textsuperscript{10.} See \textit{Kelo}, 545 U.S. 469, 493 (2005) (Kennedy, J., concurring) (arguing for heightened scrutiny for the use of eminent domain when the public use at issue is economic development); \textit{Lingle v. Chevron}, 544 U.S. 528, 548 (2005) (Kennedy, J., concurring) (joining Justice O'Connor's majority opinion repudiating the court's use of the substantive due process "substantially advances" test in takings cases, but writing separately to highlight the possibility that some regulations "might be so arbitrary or irrational as to violate due process"); \textit{Palazzolo v. Rhode Island}, 533 U.S. 606, 628 (holding that the fact that a landowner acquired his property after enactment of the challenged regulations did not automatically bar the landowner's regulatory takings claim if a previous owner could not take the steps to make the claim ripe, although this result was tempered by the conclusion the landowner had not been deprived of all economic value of his property); \textit{City of Monterey v. Del Monte Dunes at Monterey, Ltd.}, 526 U.S. 687, 694 (1999) (approving the use of jury determinations in a regulatory takings case); \textit{Apfel}, 524 U.S. at 542 (Kennedy, J., concurring) (refusing to apply takings analysis to retroactive legislation); \textit{Lucas v. S.C. Coastal Council}, 505 U.S. 1003, 1034–35 (1992) (Kennedy, J., concurring) (arguing for a standard based on a landowner's reasonable expectations, which would also take into account environmental factors); see also \textit{infra} notes 296–313 and accompanying text (discussing Justice Kennedy's role in the Court's decisions in takings cases).

\textit{Eastern and Lingle} both involved takings claims that did not occur in the context of land use decisions. \textit{Eastern} addressed the Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefit Act, 524 U.S. 498, discussed \textit{infra} notes 101–106, while \textit{Lingle} involved an oil company challenge to whether a Hawai'i statute limiting rent oil companies could charge service stations, 544 U.S. 528, discussed \textit{infra} notes 215–226. While not strictly environmental, both cases were included in this study because takings cases have such a profound impact on environmental law.

\textsuperscript{11.} Our colleague, Craig Johnston, Professor of Law at Lewis and Clark Law School, pointed this fact out to us.

"astounding record" for being in the majority in environmental cases.\textsuperscript{13} Even when he does not write an opinion, Kennedy is often the pivotal environmental vote. For example, in the Court's recent decision granting standing to a coalition of states challenging the Environmental Protection Agency's refusal to regulate carbon emission under the Clean Air Act, it was a Kennedy suggestion at oral argument that supplied the reasoning adopted by Justice Stevens's majority opinion.\textsuperscript{14} Of the eighty Supreme Court environmental opinions considered for the purposes of this article, Justice Kennedy was in the majority an astonishing seventy-seven times, or ninety-six percent of the time.\textsuperscript{15} Advocates in environmental cases must tailor their arguments to win his vote or risk losing their appeals. There is thus much to be gained by carefully examining the Kennedy environmental record, for it may very well portend the future of environmental law in the Roberts Court.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13} Lazarus, Environmental Law in the Supreme Court, supra note 7, at 714 (noting that Kennedy was in the majority in 56 of 57 cases decided between 1988 and 2000).

\textsuperscript{14} Massachusetts v. EPA, __U.S.__ (Apr. 2, 2007), 127 S. Ct 1438 (2007); see infra note 74 and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{15} See infra Appendix A (displaying tabular data of the Court's environmental decisions during Kennedy's tenure). We are indebted to Richard Lazarus, whose methodology in selecting cases for his analysis of the Court's environmental opinions influenced our methodology for selecting the cases used in this study of Justice Kennedy's environmental opinions. See Lazarus, Environmental Law in the Supreme Court, supra note 7, at 708 (explaining the reasoning behind selecting cases to include in his study of the Court's environmental opinions). We employed similar criteria to select additional cases in which the environment or natural resources are at stake in the decision, including boundary disputes between states and cases involving areas of the law with a fundamental effect on jurisdictional issues in federal environmental laws, such as the Eleventh Amendment, Fifth Amendment takings, and Commerce Clause authority.

\textsuperscript{16} At the beginning of the second term for the Roberts Court, a large number of commentators perceived Justice Kennedy as the most influential vote on the Court in a variety of areas, including the environment. See Editorial: The Kennedy Court? One Man with Caprice Makes a Majority, WALL ST. J., Oct. 7, 2006, at A6 (noting the disproportionate attention being paid to Justice Kennedy at the start of the Court's 2006 term as a symptom of his newfound prominence alone at the Court's center); Warren Richey, Will the Supreme Court Shackel New Tribunal Law?, CHRISTIAN SCI. MONITOR, Oct. 17, 2006, at USA1 (discussing Justice Kennedy's emerging role as the crucial vote in national security cases, as well as in decisions involving a number of other "hot-button social issues"); Warren Richey, For Supreme Court's New Term: Rise of a New Centrist, CHRISTIAN SCI. MONITOR, Oct. 2, 2006, at USA2 (speculating on how Kennedy's newly prominent role at the Court's center may influence a number of key decisions during the 2006–2007 term); Gregory Stanford, A High Court Tilts and Your Rights Get Squashed, MILWAUKEE J. SENTINEL, Jul. 30, 2006, at J4 (describing Justice Kennedy's centrist stance as the "saving grace" of the Roberts Court's first term); Morning Edition: A Newly Conservative Supreme Court? (National Public Radio broadcast, Oct. 2, 2006) (identifying social issues on which Kennedy assumes a more conservative stance than Justice O'Connor's centrist views); Bill Mears, Justice Kennedy Works on His Swing, CNN, Sept. 29, 2006, http://www.cnn.com/2006/LAW/09/25/scotus.kennedy/index.html
This article maintains that Kennedy is best characterized as a contextualist, attached to case-by-case fact-finding that links context to legal standards. His devotion to a nexus between facts and rules, especially evident in his standing opinions, also dominated his recent interpretation of the scope of federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act. Kennedy is also committed to states’ rights. He was part of the Rehnquist Court majority that created the first limits on the federal commerce power in sixty years, and that announced significant state (discussing Justice Kennedy’s pivotal role as the Court’s “man in the middle” in several divisive social issues).

17. Justice Kennedy, writing for a five member majority in *City of Monterey v. Del Monte Dunes at Monterey, Ltd.*, upheld a district court decision to submit a takings claim to a jury but rejected the more stringent “rough proportionality” test as a means of evaluating takings claims that do not involve exactions for the purpose of dedicating private property to public use. 526 U.S. 687, 703 (1999), discussed infra notes 107–123. In his concurrence in *Friends of the Earth, Inc. v. Laidlaw Envtl. Serv. Inc.*, Justice Kennedy stood alone in suggesting that citizen suit provisions may interfere with powers conferred on the Executive branch by Article II of the constitution. 528 U.S. 167, 197 (2000) (Kennedy, J., concurring), discussed infra notes 159–160. Nearly a decade earlier, Kennedy disagreed with Justice Scalia’s rejection of environmental plaintiff standing based on an “animal or vocational nexus” in *Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife*, and instead wrote a separate concurrence expressing his willingness to consider standing on that basis, should the Court be presented with different facts. See 504 U.S. 555, 579 (1992) (Kennedy, J., concurring), discussed infra notes 69–77. However, later in his *Defenders* concurrence, Kennedy appeared to question the validity of standing under the citizen suit provision of the Endangered Species Act for its failure to “establish that there is an injury in ‘any person’ by virtue of any ‘violation’” of the statute. See id. at 580. As a member of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, Judge Kennedy wrote an opinion holding that a plaintiff lacked standing in a Clean Water Act citizen suit. According to Kennedy, the injury was not redressable by injunctive relief since the underlying purpose of the CWA citizen suit provision—protecting clean water and the environment—was not served by the suit. Gonzales v. Gorsuch, 688 F.2d 1263, 1267 (9th Cir. 1982), discussed infra notes 33–35.


immunity from federal court suits in the Eleventh Amendment. And as a professed property rights defender, Kennedy is a government planning skeptic. These doctrinal minimalist, states’ rights, and property rights sentiments do not always point in the same direction, making Kennedy’s jurisprudence especially interesting to examine.

This analysis of the Kennedy record on the environment is in chronological order, beginning with Kennedy’s tenure on the Ninth Circuit, proceeding to his Supreme Court opinions prior to 2000, then...


Justice Kennedy’s prominence in this line of cases is demonstrated by his authorship of two subsequent opinions for the same five-member majority expounding on Eleventh Amendment state sovereign immunity. In Idaho v. Coeur d’Alene Tribe of Idaho, Justice Kennedy held that the state of Idaho was shielded from the tribe’s suit by the Eleventh Amendment. 521 U.S. 261, 281 (1997), discussed infra notes 87–100. Kennedy wrote for another five-member majority two years later in Alden v. Maine, affirming a lower court dismissal of a suit that had been filed by probation officers against their employer, the state of Maine, alleging that the state had violated the federal Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, on the grounds the suit was barred by Eleventh Amendment sovereign immunity. 527 U.S. 706, 712 (1999).

The same five-member majority banded together yet again in Board of Trustees of University of Alabama v. Garrett, in an opinion by Chief Justice Rehnquist, holding that the Eleventh Amendment shielded a state from lawsuits under a federal law, this time preventing former employees of the state of Alabama from recovering damages from the state for its failure to comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. 531 U.S. 356, 360 (2001). The five-member majority finally broke apart in the Court’s 2003 decision in Nevada Department of Human Resources v. Hibbs, when Chief Justice Rehnquist held that a state employee’s suit against the state for its failure to comply with the Family and Medical Leave Act was not barred by the Eleventh Amendment because Congress had enacted the legislation using its Fourteenth Amendment power to ameliorate past discrimination. Justices O’Connor, Souter, Ginsburg, and Breyer joined the opinion, and Justice Stevens concurred in the judgment. Justices Kennedy, Scalia, and Thomas dissented. 538 U.S. 721, 726, 744 (2003).

examining his post-2000 decisions through 2004, and finally assessing his pivotal role in the environmental decisions of 2005–2006. Section I begins by discussing Judge Kennedy’s Ninth Circuit environmental opinions, of which there are only a few. Section II turns to Kennedy’s early years on the Supreme Court, from 1988 to 2000, including several important decisions on standing, takings, and preemption. Section III evaluates Kennedy’s opinions during 2000–2004, highlighted by an important majority opinion on takings and Kennedy’s sole written environmental dissent. Section IV examines the decisions of 2005–2006, focusing on the *Kelo*, *Rapanos*, and *Lingle v. Chevron* decisions. In section V, the article profiles Kennedy’s contributions to discrete areas of the law, including standing and ripeness, federalism, takings, and statutory interpretation of environmental laws. The article concludes that Kennedy is best characterized as a doctrinal minimalist, who is attached to case-by-case fact-finding and to requiring fact-finders to show a “nexus” between rules and context; a states’ rights advocate; and a property rights defender, who is quite skeptical of government planning.

I. JUDGE KENNEDY ON THE NINTH CIRCUIT

Judge Kennedy’s environmental record on the Ninth Circuit is sparse. Appointed by President Ford in 1975, Kennedy wrote only four environmental opinions in more than a dozen years. These decisions

23. On *Kelo* and *Rapanos*, see supra notes 5–6, infra notes 227–237, 244–254 and accompanying text; on *Lingle*, see infra notes 215–226 and accompanying text.
show Kennedy to be a relatively non-doctrinaire jurist, open to considering environmental claims but hardly welcoming them.

Kennedy's first environmental opinion came in a 1980 decision that overturned a lower court's rejection of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) challenge by a citizens' group to the Federal Highway Administration's funding of a four-lane expansion on Highway 2, outside of Glacier National Park in Montana. The lower court ruled that the environmentalists' suit was barred by laches. However, a panel led by Judge Kennedy reversed on the ground that the plaintiffs had not actually delayed bringing suit for a decade because the project had been expanded and final federal approval came some nine years after it was first proposed in 1969. On the merits, Judge Kennedy concluded that the government's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the project was deficient because it failed to analyze the secondary effects of the highway, and because it did not include an adequate range of alternatives, such as improving the existing two-lane highway.

Two years later, in another NEPA suit, Judge Kennedy affirmed a lower court in a panel decision upholding a Department of Housing and Urban Development determination not to prepare an EIS on a redevelopment plan that would displace local artists in San Francisco. The plaintiffs alleged that displacing local artists would "irreparably damage the cultural character of the area," but Judge Kennedy rejected the notion that a significant effect on the cultural environment triggered an EIS. Judge Kennedy also noted that the plaintiffs failed to demonstrate a "causal nexus" between the redevelopment and any significant cultural impact, the first of many Kennedy opinions demanding "nexus." This demand for the development of specific facts sufficient to show a close fit between the conflict at issue and the purpose of the environmental law would become characteristic of Kennedy's environmental jurisprudence, culminating in his 2006 Rapanos opinion.

Another 1982 panel opinion written by Judge Kennedy affirmed a lower court's rejection of a challenge to the Environmental Protection...
Agency’s funding of a wastewater treatment facility for purposes allegedly unrelated to water pollution. Unlike the lower court, which ruled that the Clean Water Act authorized the expenditures, Judge Kennedy concluded that the plaintiff lacked standing because by the time the suit was filed, the local government grantee had already spent the money, and there was no guarantee of future funds. Thus, injunctive relief would not redress the alleged injury, and the purpose of the statute’s citizen suit provision—to protect clean water and the environment—could not be served by the plaintiff’s suit.

In still another 1982 panel opinion, Judge Kennedy upheld an Oregon district court’s grant of a preliminary injunction preventing the Yakama Tribe from harvesting Columbia River salmon. The State of Washington sought the injunction in response to extremely low salmon counts at Bonneville Dam in the spring of 1980. The tribe appealed the injunction, which involved fisheries located on or near the Yakama Reservation, on the ground that the lower court’s fishing closure extinguished the tribe’s treaty fishing rights without protecting the salmon. Although the 1980 spring chinook salmon run was over, the Ninth Circuit panel ruled that the tribe’s claim was not moot because, in light of the ongoing nature of litigation over Indian treaty fishing rights, the tribe had a “reasonable expectation” it could face a similar injunction in the future. Further, the sovereign immunity and jurisdictional issues the tribe raised were also likely to recur in the case.

33. Gonzales v. Gorsuch, 688 F.2d 1263, 1264–1265 (9th Cir. 1982). This decision drew a concurrence from Judge Wallace, who emphasized the distinction between constitutional and prudential standing, maintaining that the Clean Water Act’s citizen suit provision eliminated prudential standing barriers and gave standing to anyone who could meet Article III standing requirements. Id. at 1269 (Wallace, J., concurring).

34. Id. at 1267 (“[N]othing in the legislative history indicates that Congress intended to ignore or to test the conventional requisites of justiciability.”).

35. Id. at 1266–68 (stating that “[t]he CWA’s] grant of standing does not extend to a review of appropriations where the review and any judicial decree would be ineffective to vindicate environmental concerns”).


37. Oregon, 657 F.2d at 1012.

38. Id. at 1012 n.7.

39. Id. at 1012.
Reaching the merits, Judge Kennedy rejected the tribe’s sovereign immunity defense, concluding that the tribe had waived its immunity when it intervened in the original suit.  

He also rejected the tribe’s argument that the injunction against tribal fishing on reservation lands violated its treaty rights. Kennedy reasoned that if states have the ability to regulate treaty fishing to further conservation interests without violating treaty rights, a federal court should have the same ability to do so. This deferential treatment of the State’s position in this case was hardly surprising for a states’ rights advocate.

Judge Kennedy’s few environmental decisions on the Ninth Circuit were not those of an ideological jurist. He was not noticeably hostile to environmental claims, although he was hardly an enthusiast. He produced remarkably few environmental opinions during a dozen years on the court, a harbinger of his early years on the Supreme Court.

II. EARLY YEARS ON THE SUPREME COURT, 1988–2000

Justice Kennedy’s first dozen years on the Supreme Court were marked first by acquiescence to the opinions of his colleagues, then by two significant concurrences that revealed Kennedy to possess a significantly different approach to environmental issues than, for example, Justice Scalia. He also displayed a surprising willingness to preempt state statutes to avoid perceived overregulation, as well as a nuanced approach to landowner claims for compensation to remedy alleged regulatory takings.
Any significance in Justice Kennedy's role in environmental decisions during his first four years on the Court must be deciphered from his silence between 1988 and 1991. In all but one of the thirteen environmental decisions in which he took part during those four years, Justice Kennedy joined the majority without writing an opinion. That
exception was the Court’s decision in *Pennsylvania v. Union Gas Co.*, where Justice Kennedy joined both Justice White’s dissent, which denied that Congress intended to waive state sovereign immunity in the 1986 amendments to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, and Justice Scalia’s dissent, which denied that Congress had the power to waive the states’ Eleventh Amendment-protected immunity even if it intended to do so. Kennedy’s decision to join Scalia’s dissent foreshadowed the overturning of the majority opinion in *Union Gas* just six years later in *Seminole Tribe v. Florida*, the first in a series of opinions expanding state sovereign immunity under the Eleventh Amendment.

It was not until five years after Kennedy joined the court that he wrote an opinion in an environmental case.

Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act did not preempt local government regulation of pesticide use when those regulations did not conflict with federal regulations); Illinois v. Kentucky, 500 U.S. 380 (1991) (opinion by Justice Souter settling a boundary dispute between the two states by declaring the boundary lies at the low water mark of the Ohio River as it existed in 1972).

In the final case from this era, *Oklahoma v. New Mexico*, Justice Kennedy joined all but one part of Justice White’s majority opinion resolving a dispute over New Mexico’s diversion of additional water from the Canadian River, which had been apportioned between it and Oklahoma and Texas by an interstate compact. 501 U.S. 221, 242 (1991). Kennedy also joined Chief Justice Rehnquist’s opinion concurring in part and dissenting in part on the grounds that the Court’s interpretation of the Canadian River Compact, which gave New Mexico unrestricted use of waters originating above the Conchas Dam but restricted its use below, was erroneous in that it considered water spilled over the dam not to have originated above the dam, and thus was subject to the Compact’s use restrictions to ensure sufficient flows reach the downstream states. *Id.* at 244–45 (Rehnquist, C.J., dissenting).

49. *Id.* at 28 (White, J., concurring).
50. *Id.* at 57 (Scalia, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part). Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justice O’Connor also joined this opinion. Kennedy’s decision to join even a partial dissent in an environmental decision is notable because it has been an infrequent occurrence during his tenure on the Court. See supra note 2 (discussing his remarkable record for voting with the majority in environmental decisions).
51. 517 U.S. 44 (1996). Chief Justice Rehnquist’s majority opinion in *Seminole Tribe* was joined by Justices Kennedy, O’Connor, and Scalia, all of whom joined Justice Scalia’s *Union Gas* dissent. *Id.* at 66. The key fifth vote in *Seminole Tribe* came from Justice Clarence Thomas, who was appointed to the court two years after *Union Gas* by George H.W. Bush in 1991. Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute, Supreme Court Collection, at http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/justices/thomas.bio.html (last visited June 29, 2007).
52. See supra note 20 (discussing the Rehnquist Court’s Eleventh Amendment revolution, expanding the scope of state sovereign immunity).
A. Lucas v. South Carolina Coastal Council

In 1992, Justice Kennedy broke his silence on the environment. In *Lucas v. South Carolina Coastal Council*, he wrote a concurrence to Justice Scalia’s majority opinion ruling that the constitution required that landowners receive compensation, subject to several exceptions, for regulations that produced complete losses of economic value. Kennedy’s concurrence was quite revealing, for it indicated that a significant divide separated him from Justice Scalia. Although he joined a six-member majority in *Lucas*, Kennedy’s concurrence emphasized his disagreement with Scalia concerning the scope of the exemptions from the *Lucas* compensation rule. According to Kennedy,

54. See id. at 1032–36 (Kennedy, J., concurring). See generally Carol M. Rose, *The Story of Lucas: Environmental Land Use Regulation Between Developers and the Deep Blue Sea, in Environmental Law Stories 237, 278* (Richard J. Lazarus & Oliver A. Houck, eds. 2005) (thoroughly discussing the context and significance of the case, the latter of which Rose considered to be a prime example of “imbalanced propertization”). In what must be one of the prime examples of the law of unintended consequences, the *Lucas* exceptions have proved much more significant and enduring than the categorical takings rule the decision established. See Michael C. Blumm & Lucas Ritchie, *Lucas’s Unlikely Legacy: The Rise of Background Principles as Categorical Takings Defenses, 29 Harv. Envtl. L. Rev. 329* (2005).
56. Justice Scalia wrote for himself, Chief Justice Rehnquist, and Justices White, O’Connor, Kennedy, and Thomas. The Court reversed a decision of the South Carolina Supreme Court that had upheld the state’s defense to a landowner’s takings claim on the ground that the state Beachfront Management Act—which prohibited construction of dwellings on the landowner’s barrier island property (rendering his lots “valueless,” according to a trial court stipulation)—was a legitimate use of the police power and insulated from constitutional compensation by the so-called “nuisance exception” to the takings clause because the state was preventing a public harm. *Lucas v. S.C. Coastal Council, 404 S.E. 2d 895, 901–02* (S.C. 1991).
57. *Lucas*, 505 U.S. at 1032 (Kennedy, J., concurring in judgment).
Scalia’s exemption from compensation for regulations preventing activities that would amount to common law nuisances was too narrow because the basic test for compensation for regulatory takings was “whether the deprivation is contrary to reasonable, investment-backed expectations.” Justice Kennedy’s view was that because “courts must consider all reasonable expectations whatever the source,” the “common law of nuisance is too narrow a confine for the exercise of a regulatory power in a complex and interdependent society.” He would therefore not subject all new regulatory initiatives to compensation requirements where they produced economic wipeouts because changed conditions and new ecological understandings might justify them. For example, coastal property “may present such unique concerns for a fragile land system that the State can go further in regulating its development and use than the common law of nuisance might otherwise permit.”

Justice Kennedy’s Lucas concurrence was a clear signal that he was not persuaded by Justice Scalia’s effort to advance landowner rights in a single judicial decree. Instead, Kennedy showed himself to be a judicial conservative—a doctrinal minimalist with an affinity for fact-specific determinations. Kennedy’s Lucas concurrence revealed him to be not philosophically opposed to regulation if the need for it was evident from the record. His mention of “fragile land[s]” as justifying regulation indicated that, for Kennedy, context was a key factor.

58. Id. at 1031.
59. Id. at 1034 (Kennedy, J., concurring in the judgment) (“Where a taking is alleged from regulation which deprives the property of all value, the test must be whether the deprivation is contrary to reasonable, investment-backed expectations.”).
60. Id. at 1035 (“In my view, reasonable expectations must be understood in light of the whole of our legal tradition.”).
61. Id. at 1035 (“[The] Takings Clause does not require a static body of state property law.”). Lower courts have not restricted the nuisance defense to common law nuisances. See Blumm & Ritchie, supra note 54, at 335.
62. See Lazarus, supra note 55, at 787–88 (discussing Justice Scalia’s efforts on the Court to promote a property rights agenda).
64. See supra notes 30–32 (rejecting an argument that a project with significant effects on the cultural environment required an EIS absent any “causal nexus” between the project and any significant cultural impact while sitting on the Ninth Circuit in Goodman Group, Inc. v. Dishroom, 679 F.2d 182 (9th Cir. 1982); infra note 87 (ruling that the Gun-Free School Zones Act, invalidated by United States v. Lopez, 514 U.S. 549 (1995), was beyond the scope of congressional Commerce Clause authority because it lacked a “commercial nexus”).
65. See Lucas, 505 U.S. at 1035 (Kennedy, J., concurring).
B. Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife

Another well-known 1992 case prompted another Kennedy concurrence. In Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife, a six-member majority of the Court ruled that environmentalists lacked standing to challenge a Department of the Interior regulation exempting federal agencies acting in foreign countries from the obligation to engage in Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation before undertaking proposals that could threaten species listed under the statute. Justice Scalia again wrote for the majority, conceding that "the desire to use or observe an animal species, even for purely aesthetic purposes, was undeniably a cognizable interest for purpose of standing," but concluding that the environmentalists suffered no "imminent injury," since past visits to the species' habitats "prove nothing," and a mere intent to return in the future "without any description of concrete plans" for doing so was insufficient to create standing.

Justice Kennedy concurred in most of the six-member majority opinion, but he objected to Justice Scalia's categorical rejection that someone interested only in studying or seeing endangered species "anywhere on the globe" could have standing under "animal nexus," "vocational nexus," or "ecosystem nexus" theories. Although Kennedy


67. Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife, 504 U.S. 555 (1992). The environmental plaintiffs challenged the application of this exemption to several federally-funded projects abroad, including U.S. involvement in rebuilding the Aswan High Dam on the Nile in Egypt and construction of the Mahaweli Dam in Sri Lanka, funded by the Agency for International Development. \textit{Id.} at 563. A district court initially dismissed the suit on the grounds that the environmental plaintiffs lacked standing, but the Eighth Circuit reversed. On remand, the district court issued a judgment in favor of the environmentalists, both on the standing issue and on the merits, which the Eighth Circuit upheld. Defenders of Wildlife v. Lujan, 911 F.2d 117, 118 (8th Cir. 1990). The only issue the Supreme Court addressed was whether the environmentalists had standing. \textit{Lujan}, 504 U.S. at 558.

68. \textit{Id.} at 562–64.

69. Justice Blackmun, joined by Justice O'Connor, dissented, on the grounds that the plaintiffs had standing—they had raised a "genuine issue" of material fact—and because the majority erred in broadly rejecting standing for procedural injuries. Blackmun stated, "I cannot join the Court on what amounts to a slash-and-burn expedition through the law of environmental standing." \textit{Id.} at 589–90, 606 (Blackmun, J., dissenting). Justice Stevens concurred in the judgment because he did not believe Congress intended the consultation requirements of the ESA to apply to activities outside the U.S., but he filed a separate opinion because he disagreed with the Court's conclusion that the environmentalists lacked standing. \textit{Id.} at 581–82 (Stevens, J., concurring). Justice Souter joined Kennedy's concurrence. \textit{Id.} at 579.

70. \textit{Id.} at 579. Justice Scalia considered such theories to be "beyond all reason." \textit{Id.} at 566. Justice Kennedy took more than six weeks to decide not to join Justice Scalia's opinion because he wanted
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agreed that the environmentalists in *Defenders* failed to demonstrate concrete injury, he was “not willing to foreclose the possibility . . . that in different circumstances a nexus theory similar to those proffered . . . might support a claim of standing.” Kennedy’s affinity to nexus showings was again evident.

Kennedy’s *Defenders* concurrence also cautioned that the Court should not be understood to foreclose Congress from authorizing new causes of action: “As government programs and policies become more complex and far-reaching, we must be sensitive to the articulation of new rights of action that do not have clear analogs in our common-law tradition.” He noted that “Congress has the power to define injuries and articulate chains of causation that will give rise to a case or controversy where none existed before,” but maintained that Congress must “identify the injury it seeks to vindicate and relate the injury to the class of persons entitled to bring suit.” A majority of the Court subsequently adopted this reasoning in 2007, in *Massachusetts v. EPA*.

Kennedy’s *Defenders* concurrence suggested, however, that Congress failed to identify the injury the citizen suit provision of the ESA sought to vindicate. Therefore, the ESA citizen suit provision did not obviate the need for plaintiffs to demonstrate injury for standing purposes because

revisions to the section on redressability, objecting to Scalia’s effort to require “particularized injury.” Justice Scalia made some changes, but Justice Kennedy wrote a separate concurrence anyway, a decision that made Justice Scalia “irate,” considering it to have “scuttled” his majority opinion.” See Robert V. Percival, *Environmental Law in the Supreme Court: Highlights from the Blackmun Papers*, 35 ENVTL. L. REP. 10,637, 10,659 (2005) (citing Memorandum from Geoffrey M. Klinebert to Justice Blackmun (Jun. 2, 1992), Harry A. Blackmun Papers, box 591).


72. *Id.* at 580.

73. *Id.*

74. ___U.S.__ (Apr. 2, 2007), 127 S. Ct. 1438 (2007). Justice Stevens’s 5-4 majority opinion in *Massachusetts v. EPA* relied heavily on language from Justice Kennedy’s *Defenders* concurrence to support the conclusion that a litigant does not have to satisfy the normal redressability and immediacy requirements for standing when Congress created a procedural right to protect the litigant’s interests: “When a litigant is vested with a procedural right, that litigant has standing if there is some possibility that the requested relief will prompt the injury-causing party to reconsider the decision that allegedly harmed the litigant.” *Id.* at 1453 (citing *Lujan*, 504 U.S. at 572). Therefore, Justice Stevens concluded that the state of Massachusetts had standing to challenge EPA’s decision not to regulate greenhouse gas emissions because the agency’s “steadfast refusal . . . present[ed] a risk of harm to Massachusetts that [was] both ‘actual’ and ‘imminent’.” *Id.* at 1455 (quoting *Lujan*, 504 U.S. at 560).
while the statute purports to confer a right on "any person . . . to enjoin . . . the United States and any other governmental instrumentality or agency . . . who is alleged to be in violation of any provision of this chapter," it does not of its own force establish that there is an injury "in any person" by virtue of any "violation."\(^7\)

Although he agreed with the majority's conclusion that the plaintiffs failed to satisfy the "concrete injury" requirement for standing, he was unwilling to foreclose the possibility that a "nexus" theory of standing might be appropriate under different circumstances.\(^7\) As in Lucas, Kennedy was unwilling to follow the Scalian common-law model as a paradigm for resolving modern environmental controversies.\(^7\)

C. Gade v. National Solid Wastes Management Association

In another 1992 decision, a divided Court ruled that two Illinois hazardous waste licensing laws that required worker training were preempted by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA).\(^7\) Justice O'Connor authored the five-member majority opinion, concluding that the federal statute impliedly preempted the state laws because they conflicted with the "full purposes and objectives" of OSHA, which indicated that "Congress intended to subject employers and employees to only one set of regulations."\(^7\)

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75. Lujan, 504 U.S. at 580.

76. The requirement that a plaintiff show a "concrete and personal" injury to establish standing, Kennedy wrote, both "preserves the vitality of the adversarial process" and "confines the Judicial Branch to its proper, limited role in the constitutional framework of Government." Id. at 581.


78. Gade v. Nat'l Solid Wastes Mgmt. Ass'n, 505 U.S. 88 (1992). The state statutes aimed to "promote job safety" and "protect life, limb, and property" by requiring workers who may be exposed to hazardous wastes on the job to take at least forty hours of training under an approved Illinois program, pass a written examination, and complete an annual refresher course. See id. at 91. Federal OSHA regulations require hazardous waste workers to receive at least forty hours of training off-site and a minimum of three days of supervised field experience. See id. at 92.

79. Id. at 98. Gade is among a number of Court decisions invalidating state statutes conflicting
Justice Kennedy concurred in part, but he disagreed with Justice O'Connor's reliance on conflict preemption. Instead, he would have found express preemption; he thought Congress, in OSHA, intended to displace state regulations even where there was no actual conflict between state laws and federal regulations. His willingness to broadly interpret the preemptive effect of OSHA on state hazardous waste worker training statutes showed that Kennedy's states' rights perspective did not extend to state laws that appeared to impose duplicative regulations on businesses.

D. C & A Carbone v. Town of Clarkstown

Justice Kennedy finally produced a majority opinion in an environmental case in 1994, seven years after his ascension to the Court. In C & A Carbone, Inc., v. Town of Clarkstown, a town ordinance required all non-hazardous solid waste generated within the town to be deposited at a private waste transfer station that would collect the waste and separate the recyclable from the non-recyclable material. The ordinance in effect created a local monopoly by guaranteeing a minimum flow of waste to the station, which would then collect a fee in excess of the market rate and, after five years, sell the facility to the town for $1. A private recycler in the town challenged the ordinance's constitutionality because it prevented him from shipping to cheaper out-of-state processors, and the Court, in a 6-3 decision, struck down the ordinance as an undue burden on interstate commerce.
For Justice Kennedy, even though the ordinance did not explicitly regulate interstate commerce, “it [did] so nevertheless by its practical effect and design.” Such a burden could be justified if it were the only method available to advance a legitimate local interest, but because there were alternative ways of financing the town’s transfer facility, the ordinance could not, in Kennedy’s view, survive judicial review.

E. Idaho v. Coeur d’Alene Tribe

In 1997, during his tenth year on the Court, Justice Kennedy wrote his second majority environmental law opinion, in a case in which state sovereignty loomed large. The Coeur d’Alene Indian Tribe sued the

85. Id. at 394. Kennedy relied on a long line of cases he termed “local processing requirements that we have long held invalid.” Id. at 391–92 (citing South-Central Timber Dev. Co. v. Wunnickle, 467 U.S. 82 (1984) (striking down an Alaska regulation that required all Alaska timber to be processed within the state prior to export)). He observed that “[t]he essential vice in laws of this sort is that they bar the import of the processing service. Out-of-state meat inspectors, or shrimp hullers, [are] deprived of access to local demand for their services. Put another way, the offending local laws hoard a local resource [for] the benefit of local businesses that treat it.” Id. at 392.

86. Justice O’Connor’s concurrence faulted the majority opinion for characterizing the “flow control” ordinance as discriminating against interstate commerce, when in fact it discriminated against all competition, both local and interstate, but she concluded that it nevertheless imposed excessive burdens on interstate trade in relationship to the local benefits obtained. Id. at 401 (O’Connor, J., concurring). Justice Souter’s dissent (joined by Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justice Blackmun) emphasized the fact that the ordinance discriminated against both in-state and out-of-state providers, and “directly aid[ed] the government in satisfying a traditional governmental responsibility.” Id. at 410–11 (Souter, J., dissenting).

87. Idaho v. Coeur d’Alene Tribe of Idaho, 521 U.S. 261 (1997). Between the Carbone and the Coeur d’Alene decisions, the Court decided United States v. Lopez, 514 U.S. 549 (1995), a non-environmental law decision but one with considerable implications for environmental law. In Lopez, the Court limited Congress’s Commerce Clause power—the basis of most environmental statutes—for the first time in sixty years. Lopez led to questions about the constitutionality of the application of the Endangered Species Act to so-called non-commercial species. But four circuit court decisions upheld the application of the statute to species with little or no commercial value on a variety of grounds. See Michael C. Blumm & George N. Kimbrell, Flies, Wolves, Spiders, Toads, and the Constitutionality of the Endangered Species Act’s Take Provision, 34 ENVTL. L. 309, 327–41 (2004) (discussing the circuit court decisions).

Justice Kennedy’s concurrence, joined by Justice O’Connor, supplied the deciding votes in Lopez. His opinion was quite revealing. Although he acknowledged that the history of the Commerce Clause “counsels great restraint” from reviewing courts, Kennedy thought the Gun-Free School Zones Act was beyond congressional power because gun possession had no commercial character, and the “purposes and designs” of the statute had no “commercial nexus.” Where legislation reached beyond commercial activity “in the ordinary and usual sense of the term,” the judicial role was to inquire into whether the federal government was intruding on an area of traditional state control, because otherwise, the states could lose their role as “laboratories of experimentation.” Lopez, 504 U.S. at 668–83.

Kennedy’s search for a factual “nexus”—echoing his willingness to entertain nexus theories of
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state of Idaho and several state agencies and officials in federal district court, claiming that an 1873 Executive Order—which defined the boundaries of the original Coeur d'Alene Reservation—recognized the tribe's ownership of the bed and banks of Lake Coeur d'Alene long before Idaho became a state in 1890.88 The district court dismissed the suit as barred by the Eleventh Amendment's sovereign immunity, which protects states from federal court suits.89 But the Ninth Circuit revived the case under the Ex parte Young90 exception to the Eleventh Amendment, which allows challenges to state officials implementing unconstitutional laws.91 The Supreme Court reversed 5-4, with Justice Kennedy writing for the majority, although only Chief Justice Rehnquist fully joined his opinion.92

Although an ongoing violation of federal law is generally sufficient to invoke the Ex parte Young exception,93 Justice Kennedy concluded that the applicability of the Young exception is a function of a case-by-case evaluation of the facts.94 Under his factual scrutiny, the tribe's suit was the "functional equivalent of a quiet title action implicating special sovereignty interests."95 The Young exception did not apply because an injunction against state officials would prevent the state from asserting jurisdiction over submerged lands, held in trust for the public, and cause

standing in Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife, 504 U.S. 555 (1992), see supra notes 70–71, and his circuit court opinion in Goodman Group, Inc. v. Dishroom, 679 F.2d 182 (9th Cir. 1982), supra notes 30–31—would become characteristic of his approach to environmental cases over the next decade.

88. Coeur d'Alene, 521 U.S. 261, 264–65 (1997) (citing Executive Order of Nov. 8, 1873, reprinted in 1 INDIAN AFFAIRS: LAWS AND TREATIES 837 (Charles J. Kappler, ed) (1904)). The executive order did not mention the lakebed, but it defined one of the reservation's boundaries as the point where the Spokane River joined Lake Coeur d'Alene and "thence down along the center of the channel of said Spokane River . . . ." Id.

89. U.S. CONST., amend. XI.

90. 209 U.S. 123, 155, 159–60 (1908) (holding that a federal court injunction preventing the Minnesota Attorney General from enforcing an unconstitutional state law did not violate the Eleventh Amendment because, when violating the federal Constitution, the state official is "stripped of his official or representative character and is subjected in his person to the consequences of his individual conduct").

91. Coeur d'Alene Tribe of Idaho v. Idaho, 42 F.3d 1244, 1248 (9th Cir. 1994).


93. Id. at 281.

94. Id. at 280. Justice Kennedy ruled that the only way the tribe's suit could proceed was under the Young exception, as the state's sovereign immunity applied to the tribe which, for purposes of the Eleventh Amendment, had the status of a foreign sovereign. Id. at 269.

95. Id. at 262.
the state’s sovereign interest in its waters to be “affected in a degree fully as intrusive as almost any conceivable retroactive levy upon funds in its Treasury.”

In part of the opinion joined only by the Chief Justice, Kennedy explained that the applicability of the Young exception must always be the product of “a careful balancing and accommodation of state interests.” Justice O’Connor, writing for Justices Scalia and Thomas, concurred in the result but did not agree with the balancing. Where there is an ongoing violation of federal law in suits seeking prospective relief, Justice O’Connor thought there was no requirement that federal jurisdiction should be predicated on a judicial balancing of federal and state interests. Justice Kennedy and Justice O’Connor did not often disagree, but in the Coeur d’Alene case, Kennedy showed himself to be more devoted to judicial balancing and state sovereignty than O’Connor.

96. Id. at 287. This quote nicely foreshadowed Kennedy’s approach to the retroactive legislation at issue in Eastern Enterprises v. Apfel, 524 U.S. 498 (1998), discussed infra notes 103–104, 106 and accompanying text.

97. Coeur d’Alene, 521 U.S. at 278.

98. Id. at 291 (O’Connor, J., concurring). However, Justice O’Connor thought that the Young exception was inapplicable in this case because an injunction against state officials would amount to divesting the state of regulatory authority, the equivalent of a quiet title action to sovereign lands. Thus, the suit was effectively against the state itself, and therefore barred by the Eleventh Amendment. Id.

99. See infra note 199, noting that Justices Kennedy and O’Connor were in agreement in eighty-nine percent of the cases discussed in this study in which both participated. Their tendency to agree in environmental cases is also reflected in O’Connor’s environmental protection score, as updated by Cannon, supra note 7, which as of the 2004 term was 36.1 percent, just two percent better than Justice Kennedy’s score of 34.1 percent. Id.

100. The tribe ultimately prevailed when it persuaded the federal government, which is not limited by the Eleventh Amendment, to file suit against the state, and a 5-4 Court upheld the tribal claim as a valid pre-statehood reservation. Idaho v. United States, 533 U.S. 262 (2001). Justice Souter wrote a majority opinion in the case, joined by Justices Stevens, Breyer, O’Connor, and Ginsburg. Justice Kennedy joined Justice Rehnquist’s dissenting opinion, which took issue with the majority’s opinion because the Chief Justice did not find sufficient evidence of congressional intent to convey the submerged lands beneath Lake Coeur d’Alene prior to granting Idaho statehood. Id. at 288 (Rehnquist, C.J., dissenting). This case was one of Justice Kennedy’s three full environmental dissents. In Apfel, infra notes 103–106 and accompanying text, Justice Kennedy concurred in the judgment but dissented in part. See infra Appendix A case table.
F. Eastern Enterprises v. Apfel

In 1998, the Court invalidated provisions of the federal Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefit Act of 1992, which required companies previously employing coal miners to pay some of their health care costs in retirement, even if the companies had left the coal mining business. A four-justice plurality, in an opinion by Justice O’Connor, thought that the statute worked a compensable taking of property by “impos[ing] severe retroactive liability on a limited class of parties that could not have anticipated the liability, and the extent of that liability is substantially disproportionate to the parties’ experience.” Supplying the decisive fifth vote to strike down the statute, Justice Kennedy disagreed with the plurality on the takings issue, finding that “the mechanism by which the Government injures Eastern is so unlike the act of taking specific property that it is incongruous to call the Coal Act a taking . . . .”

In the absence of a specific property interest to trigger the takings clause, Kennedy maintained that the retroactive effect of the legislation was more appropriately evaluated under the due process clause, not the takings clause. His reluctance to employ the takings clause to scrutinize the wisdom of legislation would eventually gain a majority of the Court in the 2005 Lingle decision. On the other hand, Kennedy’s willingness to employ substantive due process, at least in the context of a statute imposing retroactive liability, might be the product of his

102. Id. at 528–29. Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justices Scalia and Thomas joined Justice O’Connor’s opinion.
103. Id. at 542 (Kennedy, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part). Justice Thomas joined Justice Kennedy’s concurrence.
104. Id. at 547–49:

Although we have been hesitant to subject economic legislation to due process scrutiny as a general matter, the Court has given careful consideration to due process challenges to legislation with retroactive effects. . . .

The case before us represents one of the rare instances where the Legislature has exceeded the limits imposed by due process . . . . [By] creating liability for events which occurred 35 years ago the Coal Act has a retroactive effect of unprecedented scope.

The four-member dissent agreed with Justice Kennedy that the statute should be evaluated on due process grounds, but thought that the lifetime benefits required by the legislation were reasonable considering the profits that the coal miners provided to the corporation and the foreseeable nature of the miners’ illnesses. Id. at 558 (Breyer, J., dissenting).
105. See infra notes 215–226 and accompanying text.
fidelity to factual analysis. In Apfel, he was able to employ the substantive due process inquiry to balance the health problems of former coal company employees against the retroactive nature of the liability imposed on the companies in favor of the latter.  

G. City of Monterey v. Del Monte Dunes at Monterey

In 1999, Justice Kennedy wrote his third environmental law majority opinion for the Court, in a case concerning a long-running dispute over the proposed development of an environmentally sensitive thirty-seven acre tract of beach in Monterey, California, that had been formerly used as an oil terminal. The developer had originally proposed 344 residential units, but the proposal was scaled back during five years of negotiations with the city to 190 units. Even though the 190-unit development preserved roughly half of the acreage as open space, the city council ultimately denied land use approval, citing concerns over the adequacy of public access and environmental damage, especially destruction of habitat of the endangered Smith’s Blue Butterfly. The developer filed a federal suit under § 1983, alleging a compensable taking. After an initial round of litigation over the ripeness of the

106. Apfel, 524 U.S. at 549–50 ("While we have upheld the imposition of liability on former employers based on past employment relationships, the statutes at issue were remedial, designed to impose an 'actual, measurable cost of [the employer's] business' which the employer had been able to avoid in the past... The Coal Act, however, does not serve this purpose. Eastern was once in the coal business and employed many of the beneficiaries, but [their] expectation of lifetime benefits... [was] created by promises and agreements made long after Eastern left the coal business... This case is far outside the bounds of retroactivity permissible under our law.").


108. Id. at 695–96.

109. Id. at 696–98. The oil company that formerly owned the property had introduced a non-native ice plant to help control erosion on the site. The ice plant crowded out native plants, spreading over a quarter of the property by the time of the proposed development. The invasive ice plant largely supplanted native buckwheat, habitat for the endangered Smith’s Blue Butterfly (Euphilotes enoptes smithi). Id. at 695. The Smith’s Blue Butterfly, which lives in two species of buckwheat on the California coast from Monterey Bay through Point Gorda, was listed as an endangered species under the ESA in 1976, after invasive plants and coastal development destroyed much of its native habitat. 41 Fed. Reg. 22,041 (June 1, 1976). See Essig Museum of Entomology, University of California at Berkeley, California’s Endangered Insects – Smith’s Blue Butterfly, http://essig.berkeley.edu/endins/euphilsn.htm (last visited June 29, 2007).


111. Del Monte Dunes, 526 U.S. at 694.
city’s appeal, the district court submitted the developer’s takings claim to a jury, which awarded the developer $1.45 million in temporary taking damages. The Ninth Circuit affirmed, ruling that the takings claim was properly submitted to the jury, and that the evidence supported the developer’s contention that the city’s repeated denials were disproportionate to the proposal’s nature and effect. The Supreme Court accepted certiorari.

Justice Kennedy wrote for a narrow five-member majority, which upheld the appropriateness of submitting the takings claim to the jury. Although the Court unanimously rejected the application of the “rough proportionality” test of *Dolan v. Tigard* to land use decisions not involving exactions dedicating private property to public use, the jury issue fractured the Court.

112. The district court ruled that the developer’s takings claim was not ripe because it failed to exhaust its remedies under state law, but the Ninth Circuit reversed on the ground that California law did not authorize compensation for a temporary taking, Del Monte Dunes at Monterey, Ltd. v. City of Monterey, 920 F.2d 1496, 1507 (9th Cir. 1990).


114. Del Monte Dunes, 95 F.3d at 1432.


117. 512 U.S. 374, 391 (1994) (holding that conditioning a hardware store’s building permit on dedication of a public greenway and bicycle path lacked a “rough proportionality” to the public costs of the development, and thus was a taking under the Fifth Amendment). In a memo to Justice Blackmun regarding the case, Kennedy noted that he agreed with Scalia’s suggestion that Rehnquist include the phrase “rough proportionality” in the *Dolan* opinion because he felt the case needed stronger language to ensure that land use regulators sufficiently justified regulatory exactions. Kennedy thought “it important to state that the exaction must be commensurate, though not to the point of demanding exact mathematical precision . . . .” See Percival, supra note 70, at 10,656, (quoting Memorandum from Justice Kennedy to Chief Justice Rehnquist (May 16, 1994), Harry A. Blackmun Papers, box 645). Blackmun included in his notes on the *Dolan* decision that Kennedy had remarked that “the cities are not hurting” and that the “burden of proof [is] on the city” to justify an exaction. Id.

118. Both the majority, *Del Monte Dunes*, 526 U.S. at 703, and the dissent, *id. at* 733 (Souter, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part) agreed that *Dolan’s* “rough proportionality” test was not applicable to this case, since it involved no exaction requiring dedication of private land to the public.
Justice Kennedy decided that the jury was not evaluating the reasonableness of the city’s land use regulations, but whether the city’s rejection of the Del Monte development was reasonably related to a legitimate public purpose. Consequently, it was within the trial court’s discretion to grant a jury trial. Further, Kennedy ruled that a federal suit seeking damages for an unconstitutional denial of compensation for a taking fell within the scope of the Seventh Amendment’s right to a jury trial. But, his opinion was careful to limit the scope of the Court’s decision concerning the availability of federal jury trials. Kennedy reasoned that the right to a jury trial extended to § 1983 suits challenging the reasonableness of a specific governmental denial, not to suits challenging the reasonableness of the regulations themselves. Justice Scalia’s concurrence advocated a much broader federal right to a jury trial, while the four-member dissent, authored by Justice Souter, denied any federal right to a jury trial for takings claimants. Characteristically, Justice Kennedy pursued a middle road between the Scalia position and that of the Court’s moderates.

H. Amoco v. Southern Ute Tribe

Justice Kennedy authored his fourth majority environmental law opinion, one which involved public lands, in 1999. The Coal Lands Acts of 1909 and 1910 reserved “coal” on certain public lands to the federal government, which the government then made available for homesteading, including lands the Southern Ute Tribe had ceded to the United States in 1880. In 1938, the federal government conveyed any

119. Id. at 706.
120. Id. at 721.
121. Id. at 720–21 (“[W]hether a landowner has been deprived of all economically viable use of his property is a predominantly factual question . . . . in actions at law otherwise within the purview of the Seventh Amendment, this question is for the jury.”).
122. Id. at 721–22 (interpreting the scope of 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and distinguishing a takings claim from a condemnation claim, in which there is no right to a jury trial).
123. Id. at 723 (Scalia, J., concurring in part and concurring in the judgment); id. at 733 (Souter, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
interest it had in the ceded lands, including its “coal” rights, back to the tribe. Subsequently, coalbed methane gas became an important energy resource, and oil and gas producers obtained rights to extract it from the homesteaders’ successors. In 1991, the Southern Ute Tribe filed suit, claiming that it owned the coalbed methane gas, since the gas was included in the government’s reservation in the 1909 and 1910 statutes. The district court ruled against the tribe, but the Tenth Circuit reversed.

In a 7-1 decision, Justice Kennedy’s opinion for the Court in Amoco Products Co. v. Southern Ute Tribes reversed the Tenth Circuit and rejected the tribe’s claims. Kennedy observed that the question was “not whether, given what scientists know today, it makes sense to regard [coalbed methane] gas as a constituent of coal but whether Congress so regarded it in 1909 and 1910.” He concluded that Congress did not, because the “common conception” of coal when the statutes passed was solid rock; in fact, the associated gas was considered a dangerous and valueless byproduct. This “natural interpretation” of the meaning of “coal” in 1909–1910 as not encompassing the associated gas was sufficient to persuade Kennedy and the majority not to employ the public land law interpretive canon that “ambiguities in land grants are construed in favor of the sovereign or the competing canons relied on by [the tribe].”

126. *Id.* at 870.

127. *Id.* at 871 (noting that oil and gas companies leased some 200,000 acres of land from landowners in which the tribe owns the underlying coal).

128. *Id.*


131. *Id.* at 880. Justice Breyer did not take part in the decision. Only Justice Ginsburg dissented. *Id.* at 880–81 (Ginsburg, J., dissenting) (concluding that ambiguities in land grants should be construed in favor of the federal government, especially because at the time of the Coal Lands Acts, the gas was considered a potential liability that would have been the responsibility of whoever had title to the coal).

132. *Id.* at 873.

133. *Id.* at 874–75.

134. *Id.* at 880.
disregarded were the Indian law canons that courts should construe ambiguities in favor of tribes and interpret statutes liberally in their favor.135

This result was strange, given that both the federal government and the tribe argued that the Coal Lands Acts reserved the methane gas. But, Kennedy and the majority were unwilling to defer to the government, the public land canon, or the Indian law canons; instead, they favored a “natural interpretation” of the meaning of “coal” from ninety years earlier.136 Perhaps Kennedy viewed the case as the equivalent of an attempt to impose retroactive property loss on the oil and gas companies.137

I. The Kennedy Environmental Record Prior to 2000

In Justice Kennedy’s first dozen years on the Supreme Court, he showed himself to be devoted to fact-based balancing, skeptical of broad doctrinal changes, and committed to a nuanced approach to most environmental issues. Although he subscribed to the categorical takings doctrine established in 

Lucas,
he wanted a larger nuisance exception than Justice Scalia articulated for the Court, and he was concerned about fashioning a doctrine protective of “fragile” lands.138 And while Kennedy denied environmentalists standing in 

Defenders,
he indicated an openness to animal, vocational, and ecosystem nexus theories of standing.139 Kennedy is a professed adherent to state sovereignty,140 but

136. Amoco, 526 U.S. at 880.
137. Note the similarity to Kennedy’s aversion to retroactive regulation in 

Apfel, supra note 106,
as well as the sentiments he voiced in 

Coeur d’Alene, supra notes 98–100. Dean David Getches has shown how the Court frequently employs subjective equitable balancing in Indian cases rather than employ foundational Indian law principles. David H. Getches, Beyond Indian Law: The Rehnquist Court’s Pursuit of States’ Rights, Color-Blind Justice and Mainstream Values, 86 MINN. L. REV. 267, 344–50 (2001). See also David H. Getches, Conquering the Cultural Frontier: The New Subjectivism of the Supreme Court in Indian Law, 84 CAL. L. REV. 1573, 1644–45 (1996) (surveying Justice Kennedy’s Indian law jurisprudence, which includes joining every opinion denying tribal sovereign immunity, and noting that Justice Kennedy “has displayed a profound disinterest in Indian law . . . ”).
140. See, e.g., Idaho v. Coeur d’Alene Tribe of Idaho, 521 U.S. 261, 278 (1997), discussed supra
he is willing to preempt state statutes to prevent overregulation,\textsuperscript{141} and he will employ the Commerce Clause for the same purpose.\textsuperscript{142} He was open to jury trials to decide takings cases under limited circumstances\textsuperscript{143} but opposed to employing takings doctrine to question the wisdom of legislation.\textsuperscript{144} He will interpret legislation protecting fragile lands and establishing ecosystem-nexus causes of action generously,\textsuperscript{145} but he does not generously interpret retroactive legislation.\textsuperscript{146} This nuanced approach to environmental claims would continue after 2000.

III. DECISIONS OF 2000–2004

The new millennium saw Justice Kennedy make some surprising comments about the effect of the Executive’s authority on Congress’s ability to authorize the imposition of civil penalties as a result of citizen suits.\textsuperscript{147} He also continued his readiness to preempt state statutes in the interest of eliminating duplicative regulation.\textsuperscript{148} And he supported a relaxed ripeness doctrine and the elimination of the government’s categorical defense for pre-existing regulations in takings cases.\textsuperscript{149} At the same time he endorsed a large view of property that made successful takings claims against environmental regulation unlikely.\textsuperscript{150} In his sole written dissent in an environmental case, his view of cooperative


\textsuperscript{143} See City of Monterey v. Del Monte Dunes at Monterey, Ltd., 526 U.S. 687, 721 (1999), discussed supra note 119–120 and accompanying text.


\textsuperscript{146} See supra note 137 and accompanying text (discussing Amoco, Apfel, and Coeur d’Alene).


\textsuperscript{150} See id. at 632, discussed infra note 183 and accompanying text (Kennedy refusing the landowner’s invitation to conceptually sever his property by looking only at the restricted wetlands and ignoring the unregulated uplands which retained substantial economic value).
federalism led him to endorse a non-statutory interpretation of the Clean Water Act that reflected his view that states’ rights are more important than environmental protection.\footnote{151}

A. Friends of the Earth v. Laidlaw

Whether environmentalists could maintain a Clean Water Act citizen suit for civil penalties drew a curious concurrence from Justice Kennedy in 2000 in \textit{Friends of the Earth v. Laidlaw}\.\footnote{152} The environmentalists claimed that they fished in and recreated on waters polluted by a company’s mercury discharges in violation of its Clean Water Act permit\.\footnote{153} The district court agreed that the company had violated its permit and imposed a civil fine of over $400,000, but it declined to issue an injunction because the company had achieved substantial compliance with its permit during the litigation\.\footnote{154} The Fourth Circuit reversed, on the ground that the environmentalists’ suit was moot, because the only available remedy, the payment of civil penalties to the government, would not redress any injury they suffered.\footnote{155}

The Supreme Court upheld the environmentalists’ standing, reversing the Fourth Circuit in a 7-2 decision written by Justice Ginsburg\.\footnote{156} The majority ruled that civil penalties in citizen suits do in fact redress a plaintiff’s injuries, due to the deterrent effect they have on future violations.\footnote{157} The majority also held that the suit was not moot, because

\begin{flushleft}
\footnote{152. 528 U.S. at 197 (Kennedy, J., concurring).}
\footnote{153. \textit{Id.} at 181–83.}
\footnote{154. \textit{See id.} at 178.}
\footnote{156. \textit{Laidlaw}, 528 U.S. at 173–74. Although Justice Ginsburg attended Harvard Law School for a year, she graduated from Columbia Law School. When she was nominated by President Clinton, Kennedy sent a note to Justice Blackmun (like Kennedy, a Harvard Law School graduate) that the Court was still one vote short of a Harvard Law School majority (with Ginsburg replacing Byron White, a Yale Law School alum), although he did state, “But if you are patient, we shall prevail. Tony.” \textit{See} Percival, \textit{supra} note 70, at 10,661 (citing Note from Justice Kennedy to Justice Blackmun (Jun. 14, 1993), Harry A. Blackmun Papers, box 116). And Justice Kennedy was correct: with the appointment of Chief Justice Roberts, Harvard Law School now has a five-member majority on the Court.}
\footnote{157. \textit{Laidlaw}, 528 U.S. at 185. The Court distinguished the case from \textit{Steel Co. v. Citizens for a Better Environment}, 523 U.S. 83 (1998) (finding no standing, due to lack of redressability, for environmentalists to bring a suit for civil penalties because the company agreed to comply with the}\end{flushleft}
the company failed to prove that it was "absolutely clear" that the permit violations would not recur.\textsuperscript{158}

Justice Kennedy issued a cryptic concurrence in \textit{Laidlaw}, raising the question of the constitutionality of civil penalties in citizen suits:

Difficult and fundamental questions are raised when we ask whether exactions of public fines by private litigants, and the delegation of Executive power which might be inferable from the authorization, are permissible in view of the responsibilities committed to the Executive by Article II of the Constitution of the United States.\textsuperscript{159}

With these words, Kennedy seemed to open the door for constitutional challenges to statutory civil penalty provisions based on congressional interference with Article II's directive that the President "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed."\textsuperscript{160}

\textbf{B. United States v. Locke}

Justice Kennedy authored his fifth environmental law majority opinion in 2000, this one for a unanimous Court, in another preemption case. In \textit{United States v. Locke},\textsuperscript{161} the Court invalidated Washington state laws, passed in the wake of the \textit{Exxon Valdez} oil spill, regulating oil tankers in the state's waters.\textsuperscript{162} An oil tanker trade association

\textsuperscript{158} \textit{Laidlaw}, 528 U.S. at 193.

\textsuperscript{159} Id. at 197 (Kennedy, J., concurring).

\textsuperscript{160} U.S. CONST., Art. II, § 3. This sentiment echoed one expressed by Justice Scalia eight years earlier in \textit{Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife}, 504 U.S. 555, 577 (1992), when he wrote, "To permit Congress to convert the undifferentiated public interest in executive officers' compliance with the law into an 'individual right' vindicable in the courts is to permit Congress to transfer from the President to the courts the Chief Executive's most important constitutional duty, to 'take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed . . . .'"

\textsuperscript{161} 529 U.S. 89 (2000).

\textsuperscript{162} United States v. Locke, 529 U.S. 89, 96–97 (2000). Washington created a state Office of Marine Safety and directed it to devise standards for spill prevention plans which would provide
challenged the state's regulations on the grounds that federal uniformity preempted state authority to regulate vessels. After the district court upheld the state regulations, the federal government intervened on behalf of the tanker operators, but the Ninth Circuit upheld all but one of the state regulations.\(^{163}\)

The Supreme Court reversed.\(^{164}\) Justice Kennedy interpreted the savings clause in the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) of 1990—legislation Congress passed as its own reaction to the Exxon Valdez spill—to create only a limited exception to the general rule of federal preemption in maritime law, allowing states to continue to enforce liability rules against companies responsible for oil spills.\(^{166}\) Subject to this limited exception in the OPA, Kennedy ruled that the Ports and Waterways Safety Act of 1972 controls vessel regulation, and the OPA did not affect the 1972 law's preemptive effect on conflicting state regulations.\(^{168}\) While a state may have a legitimate interest in passing regulations to prevent an environmental disaster like an oil spill, he maintained that the Court must inquire into whether the local laws are consistent with the federal scheme, including the 1972 statute's objective of providing "uniformity of regulation for maritime commerce."\(^{169}\) The Court therefore invalidated some of the Washington regulations as preempted by federal law and remanded the remainder for reconsideration by the district court.\(^{170}\) Justice Kennedy did acknowledge the potential widespread harm to the environment that the

the "best achievable protection" from oil spills. The ensuing regulations developed by the agency regulated tanker design, equipment, reporting, and operating requirements. If a vessel failed to comply with these regulations, it could be subject to penalties, restrictions on its ability to operate in the state's waters, or be barred from access to the state's waters. Id. at 97; see also WASH. REV. CODE § 88.46.040(3) (1994) (directing the Office of Marine Safety to develop oil tanker standards); WASH. ADMIN. CODE §§ 317-21-130, 317-21-200-265 (1999) (providing requirements for oil tankers operating in Washington waters); WASH. REV. CODE §§ 88.46.070, 88.46.080, 88.46.090 (establishing possible sanctions for violating the operating requirements).


164. Locke, 529 U.S. at 99, 117.


166. Locke, 529 U.S. at 105.


168. Locke, 529 U.S. at 107.

169. Id. at 108.

170. Id. at 112–17.
state was attempting to avoid, but he maintained that the Court had to focus on “political responsibility,” and he made no effort to determine whether the federal laws alone provided adequate protection to the marine environment.\textsuperscript{171}

\textbf{C. Palazzolo v. Rhode Island}

In 2001, Kennedy issued his sixth environmental law majority opinion, writing for a 5-4 majority that faulted the Rhode Island Supreme Court’s rejection of Anthony Palazzolo’s takings claim concerning the state’s denial of his plans to develop his coastal property by filling wetlands.\textsuperscript{172} The Rhode Island Supreme Court upheld the trial court’s rejection of Palazzolo’s argument that the state’s wetland regulations worked a taking of his property because 1) his claim was not ripe, 2) he had no right to challenge regulations that pre-dated his acquisition of the site,\textsuperscript{173} and 3) the uplands on his property remained developable, thus leaving Palazzolo with substantial economic value.\textsuperscript{174}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{171} Id. at 117 (“When one contemplates the weight and immense mass of oil ever in transit by tankers, the oil’s proximity to coastal life, and its destructive power even if a spill occurs far upon the open sea, international, federal, and state regulation may be insufficient protection. Sufficiency, however, is not the question before us.”).
  \item \textsuperscript{172} Palazzolo v. Rhode Island, 533 U.S. 606, 611–14 (2001). The wetlands were actually a salt marsh subject to tidal flooding. \textit{id.} at 606.
  \item \textsuperscript{173} Palazzolo’s corporation actually acquired the site in the 1950s, before enactment of the state’s wetland regulations. But, by the time the state dissolved the corporation in 1978 (because of tax delinquency), and title passed to Palazzolo as an individual, the state’s wetland regulations were in effect. \textit{See id.} at 613–14.
  \item \textsuperscript{174} Palazzolo v. Rhode Island, 746 A.2d 707, 714, 717 (R.I. 2000). The court reached its conclusion that Palazzolo’s takings claim was not ripe because he had never applied for a permit to develop the seventy-four lot subdivision he used as the basis for his claim. Nor had he applied to develop the land in a manner that would involve less intensive filling of wetlands.
\end{itemize}
Writing for a fractured Court,\textsuperscript{175} Justice Kennedy reversed on the ripeness and pre-existing regulation grounds.\textsuperscript{176} As in \textit{Del Monte Dunes},\textsuperscript{177} Palazzolo had submitted multiple unsuccessful applications, and because of the "unequivocal nature" of the state's regulations, Kennedy concluded that submission of further development plans would have been futile, and therefore the suit was ripe.\textsuperscript{178} Moreover, the majority overturned the state court rule barring a takings challenge because of regulations pre-dating the landowner's acquisition of the property, declaring that "[t]he State may not put so potent a Hobbesian stick into the Lockean bundle."\textsuperscript{179} Thus, the Court rejected the so-called

\textsuperscript{175} Although Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justices O'Connor, Scalia, and Thomas joined Justice Kennedy's majority opinion, both Justice O'Connor and Justice Scalia filed separate concurring opinions. \textit{Palazzolo}, 533 U.S. at 610. Justice O'Connor's concurrence emphasized that the Court's holding that post-regulatory acquisition of a property did not automatically bar a takings claim should not be interpreted to mean that the prior existence of the regulation was not relevant to whether a taking occurred within the framework of \textit{Penn Central} balancing (see infra note 182 and accompanying text), as evidence of the regulation's effect on both investment-backed expectations and the character of the government action. \textit{Palazzolo} at 633–34 (O'Connor, J., concurring). Justice Scalia's concurrence objected to this notion that an existing regulation should be considered as part of the investment-backed expectation inquiry because, in his opinion, \textit{Penn Central} balancing "should have no bearing" in determining whether there was a "total taking." \textit{Id.} at 637 (Scalia, J., concurring). See infra note 182.

Justice Stevens joined the majority opinion in its determination that the takings claim was ripe because the regulations at issue prohibited any development of the wetlands. But because Palazzolo gained title to the property only after the regulations had become effective, Stevens thought he lacked standing to challenge regulations pre-dating his ownership of the property. \textit{Palazzolo}, 533 U.S. at 642–43 (Stevens, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part). Justice Ginsburg filed a dissent, joined by Justices Souter and Breyer, disagreeing with Justice Kennedy's ripeness conclusion. She agreed with the Rhode Island Supreme Court that Palazzolo's takings claim was not ripe because he had never sought to develop only the upland portion of the property that was not affected by the state wetlands regulations. \textit{Id.} at 647 (Ginsburg, J., dissenting). Justice Breyer filed a separate dissent to note that while acquisition of a parcel of land after the adoption of restrictive zoning regulations may not automatically bar a takings claim, that fact should be evaluated using \textit{Penn Central} balancing, endorsing Justice O'Connor's conclusion. \textit{Id.} at 655 (Breyer, J., dissenting).

\textsuperscript{176} \textit{Id.} at 618–30.

\textsuperscript{177} See \textit{City of Monterey v. Del Monte Dunes at Monterey, Ltd.}, 526 U.S. 687 (1999), \textit{supra} note 107 and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{178} \textit{Palazzolo}, 533 U.S. at 619; see also \textit{id.} at 625–26 ("Where the state agency charged with enforcing a challenged land-use regulation entertains an application from an owner and its denial of the application makes clear the extent of development permitted . . . federal ripeness rules do not require the submission of further and futile applications . . . .").

\textsuperscript{179} \textit{Id.} at 627. See infra note 302 (describing the meaning of "Hobbesian"). For an insightful reexamination of property as a bundle of rights, including rights of the state, see Myrl L. Duncan, \textit{Reconceiving the Bundle of Sticks: Land as a Community-Based Resource}, 32 ENVTL. L. 773 (2002).
“notice rule,” by which government defendants could categorically defeat takings claims where the landowner acquired the property after promulgation of the restrictive regulation. According to Justice Kennedy, the proper inquiry for takings purposes was whether a landowner’s predecessor could have successfully maintained a takings claim. This position did not represent a majority of the Court, however, as Justice O’Connor’s concurrence emphasized that landowner notice of existing regulations was a highly relevant factor in determining both the reasonableness of a landowner’s investment-backed expectations and the regulation’s economic effect under the Court’s dominant takings test, the so-called *Penn Central* balancing.

The result proved to be a Pyrrhic victory for the landowner, for Justice Kennedy did not disturb the Rhode Island Supreme Court’s ruling that Palazzolo retained substantial value in the unregulated upland.  

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181. *Palazzolo*, 533 U.S. at 627 (“Were we to accept the State’s rule, the postenactment transfer of title would absolve the State of its obligation to defend any action restricting land use, no matter how extreme or unreasonable. A State would be allowed, in effect, to put an expiration date on the Takings Clause. This ought not to be the rule. Future generations, too, have a right to challenge unreasonable limitations on the use and value of land.”).


Justice Scalia, also in the majority, wrote a separate concurrence largely criticizing Justice O’Connor’s approach, and suggesting the pre-existing notice of regulatory restrictions should have no effect on whether a regulation worked a taking, except where it formed a “background principle” of state property law, so that a *Penn Central* takings claim would be unaffected by transfers of title. *Id.* at 636–37 (Scalia, J., concurring). See Lazarus, supra note 55 at 817 (stating that Justice Scalia wrote his separate concurrence in *Palazzolo* for the “purpose of taking deliberate and harsh aim at O’Connor”).
portion of his property. Consequently, the Court remanded the case to the Rhode Island courts to determine whether the wetlands regulation worked a Penn Central-type taking. Palazzolo was unsuccessful in this effort. Nevertheless, although Palazzolo was unable to destroy the wetlands in pursuit of his proposed development, Justice Kennedy’s opinion was largely favorable to the landowner because it relaxed ripeness rules, eliminated the regulatory notice as a categorical governmental defense, and demonstrated considerable suspicion of the state’s “Hobbesian” environmental regulations.

D. Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation v. EPA

2004 witnessed the only dissent Justice Kennedy wrote among the eighty environmental cases in this survey. At issue was whether the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) could issue Clean Air Act compliance orders against the state of Alaska to stop the construction of a polluting facility after the EPA concluded that the state’s determination of “best available control technology” (BACT) to reduce plant emissions was unreasonable. EPA and the states make BACT determinations on a case-by-case basis, considering energy, environmental, and economic

183. Palazzolo, 533 U.S. at 632. The regulation had not eliminated all value of Palazzolo’s property, as it was worth an estimated $200,000 with the regulation (although nearly $3.2 million without the regulation). Justice Kennedy wrote that under these circumstances, there was no Lucas-type taking because Palazzolo retained more than a “token interest,” and the regulation did not leave the land “economically idle.” Id. at 631.

184. Id. at 630.

185. Palazzolo v. Rhode Island, 785 A.2d 561 (R.I. 2001). Following the Court’s decision, the Rhode Island Supreme Court remanded the case to the state superior court to analyze the takings claim under Penn Central. Id. at 561. The superior court concluded that the proposed development’s negative effects on nearby Winnapaug Pond constituted a public nuisance. Palazzolo v. Rhode Island, No. WM 88-0297, 2005 WL 1645974, at *5 (R.I. Super. 2005). Further, because one half of Palazzolo’s property fell below the mean high tide line, under the state’s public trust doctrine, the state holds these lands in trust for the public. Id. at *6–7. Thus, Palazzolo had no right to fill any wetlands below the mean high tide line without state legislative permission, significantly diminishing any reasonable investment-backed expectations he might have had for developing the property. Id. at *12–14.

186. See supra notes 178 (ripeness), 180 (notice rule), 179 (Hobbesian state power) and accompanying text.

Each state administers its own EPA-approved clean air program, but EPA has enforcement authority as well, and the Clean Air Act authorizes EPA to take remedial action against any state not in compliance with the statute, including issuing "an order prohibiting the construction." EPA invoked this authority to prevent the Alaska state agency from issuing a permit to the facility, alleging that the state-prescribed BACT measures were unreasonable. The state maintained that under the Clean Air Act, only a state has the authority to decide which technology is "best available."

A five-member Court majority, in an opinion by Justice Ginsburg, sided with EPA, even though it refused to give Chevron deference to EPA guidance documents. Nonetheless, the Court considered EPA's interpretation of its enforcement authority to be reasonable, based on an administrative record that showed the state's BACT would produce considerably more emissions than alternative technology, and that included no evidence indicating that such an alternative was economically infeasible.

Justice Kennedy, for a four-member dissent that included Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justices Scalia and Thomas, thought that the EPA lacked authority to take enforcement action against a state exercising its

188. See id. at 468 (citing Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7479(3) (2000)).
189. 42 U.S.C. § 7413(a)(5)(A). See also id. § 7477 ("prevention of significant deterioration" provision also authorizing EPA to issue "an order . . . to prevent the construction . . . of a facility . . . that does not meet PSD requirements).
190. See Alaska Dep't of Envtl. Conservation, 540 U.S. at 474, 480 (describing the exchanges in the permitting process for the Red Dog Mine, a zinc concentrate mine 100 miles north of the Arctic Circle, which led to EPA’s 1999 order).
191. See 42 U.S.C. § 7479(3) (defining “best available control technology” to mean “an emission limitation based on the maximum degree of reduction of each pollutant subject to regulation . . . which the permitting authority, on a case-by-case basis, taking into account energy, environmental, and economic impacts and other costs, determines is achievable for such facility through application of production processes and available methods, systems, and techniques, including fuel cleaning, clean fuels, or treatment or innovative fuel combustion techniques for control of each such pollutant”).
statutory discretion. Instead, he believed that the EPA should have challenged the state’s BACT determination in state proceedings. He also charged the majority with giving the EPA interpretation inappropriate deference, maintaining that the majority “opinion is chock-full of Chevron-like language.” In Kennedy’s judgment, the majority abrogated the cooperative federalism scheme Congress constructed in the Clean Air Act. He declared that “federal agencies cannot consign States to the ministerial tasks of information gathering and making initial recommendations, while reserving to themselves the authority to make final judgments under the guise of surveillance and oversight.”

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation decision is a telling one. Justice Kennedy not only issued his only written dissent in an environmental case, but he also departed from his fellow centrist, Justice O’Connor, which was a rare event. Moreover, while the case turned on the intricacies of a complex federal statute, one would have thought that those intricacies supported the respect the majority gave to the agency charged with the administration of the statute, even if Chevron deference was inappropriate. Further, the text of the Clean Air Act twice authorized the EPA to enforce against non-complying states and facilities. But neither that text, nor the statute’s complexity mattered as much to Justice Kennedy as his conception of the federal-state balance implicit in the statute’s structure. Although quick to find federal preemption of state tanker safety and hazardous waste worker training requirements, and willing to strike down a local recycling ordinance as an unconstitutional interference with interstate

194. Id. at 503 (Kennedy, J., dissenting).
195. Id. at 509.
196. Id. at 517.
197. Id. at 518.
198. Professor Lazarus, the closest observer of the Court’s environmental law opinions, considers Justice Kennedy “the most significant Justice in environmental cases, at least to the extent that he has been in the majority more often than any other Justice, often providing the decisive fifth vote.” Richard J. Lazarus, Human Nature, the Laws of Nature, and the Nature of Environmental Law, 24 VA. ENVTL. L. J. 231, 250 (2006).
199. Of the cases we consider in this study, O’Connor and Kennedy agreed in sixty-seven of the seventy-five cases in which both participated, or eighty-nine percent of the time. These statistics count only agreement with the majority or the dissent, not separate concurrences.
200. See supra note 190 and accompanying text.
commerce, Kennedy seemed to see in the Clean Air Act a kind of “reverse preemption” in which state action foreclosed federal action. He accused the majority of taking “a great step backward in Congress’ design to grant States a significant stake in developing and enforcing national environmental objectives.”


Justice Kennedy’s decisions in the early 2000s did not represent a sharp deviation from the path he set in his first years on the Court, as he continued to maintain his nuanced approach. He remained willing to preempt state legislation to prevent perceived overregulation, and he continued to encourage takings claims by reducing ripeness barriers and eliminating government defenses based on notice of existing regulations. But, he managed to defeat most takings claims by endorsing a large view of the property in Palazzolo, a view subsequently confirmed by the Court in a later case. In what is probably the most revealing case of his early twenty-first century jurisprudence, Justice Kennedy made clear in his Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation dissent that states’ rights were more important to him than environmental protection, at least when the latter involved more than one level of governmental regulation. This case shows that Kennedy’s priority in doubtful cases is not environmental


207. Id. at 632, discussed supra note 183 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy’s refusal to conceptually sever Palazzolo’s wetlands from his uplands).


protection but preservation of state autonomy. And he is strident about it.\textsuperscript{210}

IV. DECISIONS OF 2005–2006

In recent years, Justice Kennedy saw his view that the takings clause was an inappropriate vehicle for substantive challenges to governmental regulation vindicated by the Court.\textsuperscript{211} He also became the deciding vote both in the Court’s affirmation of governmental authority to condemn land for economic development,\textsuperscript{212} and in its decision to limit regulation of wetlands not sufficiently connected to navigable waters,\textsuperscript{213} although the latter decision raised many more questions than it answered.\textsuperscript{214} In all of these cases, Kennedy’s fidelity to fact-based decisionmaking remained evident.

A. Lingle v. Chevron

Of the two celebrated property rights cases of the 2004 Supreme Court term, \textit{Lingle v. Chevron} received decidedly less press attention than \textit{Kelo v. City of New London}, although it is not clear that the result is less significant. \textit{Lingle} concerned a Hawaiian statute enacted in response to the state’s highly concentrated gasoline market that produced extremely high consumer prices.\textsuperscript{215} The statute capped the maximum rent an oil company could charge dealers leasing its service stations.\textsuperscript{216} Chevron, one of only six wholesalers in the state, claimed the statute prevented it from recovering its expenses and failed to “substantially

\textsuperscript{210} Professor Lazarus, \textit{supra} note 198 at 250, observed that Kennedy’s \textit{Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation} dissent “relied on remarkably strident rhetoric.” Lazarus suggested that Kennedy’s dissent erred by not considering the reasons for congressional distrust of state regulation in the Clean Air Act: thus, “what Justice Kennedy perceived as a problem may have been better understood as a solution.” \textit{Id.} at 251.

\textsuperscript{211} See \textit{Lingle v. Chevron}, 544 U.S. 528, 548 (2005), discussed \textit{infra} notes 215–226 and accompanying text.


\textsuperscript{214} See, e.g., \textit{infra} note 246 (discussing post-Rapanos cases).


\textsuperscript{216} \textit{Id.}
advance” a legitimate state interest, a showing that the Supreme Court seemed to require the government to demonstrate in its 1980 Agins v. Tiburon decision. Chevr.. challenged the regulation, the district court twice ruled in favor of the oil company, and the Ninth Circuit twice affirmed, all upholding the relevance of the “substantially advances” test.

Somewhat surprisingly, a unanimous Supreme Court repudiated the “substantially advances” test for regulatory takings. Justice O’Connor’s opinion for the Court denied that the test had any “proper place in our takings jurisprudence.” The test’s focus on the effectiveness of a governmental regulation was, she maintained, actually a due process clause test, which was “logically prior to and distinct from” whether its effect produced too great a burden on an individual property holder.

217. See id. at 534.
218. See Agins v. City of Tiburon, 447 U.S. 255, 261 (1980) (holding that a landowner’s takings claim failed because the ordinances at issue substantially advanced a legitimate state interest by protecting residents from the “ill effects” of urbanization).
219. After the district court initially ruled in Chevron’s favor, the state appealed to the Ninth Circuit, challenging the “substantially advances” test. The appeals court affirmed on the appropriateness of the standard, although it remanded as to its application. Chevron v. Cayetano, 224 F.3d 1030, 1042 (9th Cir. 2000). The district court then concluded that the statute was unconstitutional by failing to advance a legitimate state interest, because the effect of the statute would be to actually increase gasoline prices, not lower them. The Ninth Circuit again affirmed, upholding the use of the “substantially advances” test. Chevron v. Bronster, 363 F.3d 846, 849 (9th Cir. 2004).
220. Lingle, 544 U.S. at 540. Justice Kennedy had been complaining about the Agins “substantially advances” test as early as Lucas, when he argued in conference that the “Agins language is not correct and has to be explained.” See Percival, supra note 70, at 10,654–55 (citing Notes of Justice Blackmun (Feb. 29, 1992 & Mar. 1, 1992), Harry A. Blackmun Papers, box 599).
221. Lingle, 544 U.S. at 540. The Court made an exception to the statement in the text for land use exactions, such as those involved in Dolan v. City of Tigard, 512 U.S. 374, 391 (1994) (requiring a “rough proportionality” between the effect of proposed developments and requirements to dedicate land for public purposes), discussed supra notes 117–118.
According to Justice O’Connor, the purpose of regulatory takings jurisprudence is to identify regulatory actions that are “functionally equivalent” to physical takings of property by focusing on “the severity of the burden” the regulation imposes on private property. Lingle, 544 U.S. at 539.
222. Id. at 543. This conclusion vindicated longstanding arguments by John Echeverria. See John D. Echeverria, Takings and Errors, 51 ALA. L. REV. 1047, 1050 (2000) (criticizing the “substantially advances” test as the source of error in takings decisions, and analogizing the test to Due Process Clause means-ends analysis); John D. Echeverria, Does a Regulation That Fails to Advance a Legitimate Governmental Interest Result in a Regulatory Taking?, 29 ENVTL. L. 853 (1999) (arguing the “substantially advances” test has no place in takings analysis); John D. Echeverria & Sharon Dennis, The Takings Issue and the Due Process Clause: A Way Out of a Doctrinal Confusion, 17 VT. L. REV. 695, 716 (1993) (arguing for the establishment of a new
Justice Kennedy wrote a concurrence to emphasize that the Court’s abandonment of the “substantially advances” test for a regulatory taking did not preclude the possibility that “a regulation might be so arbitrary or irrational as to violate due process,” citing his *Eastern Enterprises* concurrence.²²³ His *Lingle* concurrence was a reminder that Kennedy—whose puzzling *Laidlaw* concurrence indicated an evident hostility to governmental control²²⁴—was more than willing to erect a new era of substantive due process review, in which federal courts would police the wisdom of local land use regulations. Justice Kennedy’s apparent moderation in the takings context²²⁵ hardly seems evident outside that context.²²⁶ Upon close inspection, Kennedy seems more of a regulatory skeptic than a moderate.

B. Kelo v. City of New London

Far more celebrated (or notorious) than *Lingle* was the well-known *Kelo* decision, which inspired a widespread political revolt.²²⁷ *Kelo* involved the question of whether condemnation for private economic development can qualify as a public use. The city of New London,


224. See supra notes 159–160 and accompanying text.


Connecticut—which had purchased most of the land necessary for a redevelopment project in an economically depressed area—decided to condemn fifteen “holdout” properties as part of its plan to revitalize an ailing economy. Unlike most condemnations, however, much of the condemned land here would be used for private residential and commercial use, including a resort hotel and conference center.

The holdouts filed suit in Connecticut court, challenging this use of the eminent domain authority. The trial court granted relief as to some parcels, but the Connecticut Supreme Court reversed, ruling that all the condemnations were permissible public uses and in the public interest.

A fractured Court upheld the city’s plan on a 5-4 vote. The majority opinion, written by Justice Stevens, decided that the city’s determination that the neighborhood warranted an economic revitalization program deserved a high degree of judicial deference. According to Justice Stevens, the city’s carefully considered development plan ensured that there would be no illegitimate taking of property from one owner to another without a public benefit.

Justice Kennedy’s concurrence supplied the deciding vote in the case. He did not share the majority’s position concerning deference to

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228. Most of the properties necessary to carry out the city’s plan were acquired by purchase; only a few required condemnation. *Kelo*, 545 U.S. at 475. The city was clearly authorized under state law to condemn land—even if it was already developed—for economic development if it were for a “public use” and in the “public interest.” *Kelo*, 545 U.S. at 476 (citing CONN. GEN. STAT. § 8-186 et seq. (2005)).


231. *Kelo*, 545 U.S. at 470.

232. *Id.* at 483.

233. *Id.* (“The City has carefully formulated a development plan that it believes will provide appreciable benefits to the community, including—but by no means limited to—new jobs and increased tax revenue.”).

234. Justice O’Connor wrote for the four-member dissent that included Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justices Scalia and Thomas. She thought the majority had taken her opinion in *Midkiff* (upholding the use of eminent domain to break up a land oligopoly) too far in authorizing eminent domain for economic development, “[since] nearly any lawful use of real private property can be said to generate some incidental benefit to the public.” *Id.* at 501 (O’Connor, J., dissenting). She would restrict its use to programs aimed at curing “public harms,” like blight (as in *Berman*) and land oligopoly (as in *Midkiff*). Without such limits, she predicted that “[t]he beneficiaries are likely
the city; instead he suggested the need for heightened judicial scrutiny of certain declarations of public use to guard against condemnations that "favor a particular private party, with only incidental or pretextual public benefits." In cases of possible impermissible favoritism to private parties, Kennedy called for "a careful and extensive inquiry" into whether the development plan would satisfy what amounted to a seven-factor test. This fact-intensive inquiry seemed to be an effort to transform the minimum scrutiny advocated by the plurality into something approaching intermediate judicial scrutiny—what Kennedy referred to as "meaningful rational basis review." The result was consistent with his interest in reviving substantive due process review, evidenced in *Apfel*, and his fidelity to fact-based determinations, epitomized in *Coeur d'Alene*, among other opinions.

C. Rapanos v. United States

The final decision in this study was the most closely watched environmental law case of the Court's 2005 term. Again, Justice Kennedy supplied the deciding vote. The controversy concerned two cases involving four Michigan wetlands, all lying near ditches or man-made drains that emptied into traditionally navigable waters. In one case, the government brought an enforcement action against a developer who filled without a permit; in the other, the government denied the

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235. Id. at 491 (Kennedy, J., concurring).

236. Id. at 491–92 (Kennedy, J., concurring) (calling for investigation as to whether 1) the primary beneficiaries of the plan were the developer and private businesses; 2) there were more than incidental benefits to the city; 3) there was evidence of depressed economic conditions; 4) there was a substantial commitment of public funds before identifying most of the private beneficiaries; 5) the government reviewed several alternative development plans; 6) the government selected the developer from a variety of competitors, not one identified beforehand; and 7) the private beneficiaries were identified beforehand).

237. Id. at 492. Kennedy suggested that the trigger for this more stringent standard of review was when the "risk of undetected impermissible favoritism of private parties is so acute that a presumption (rebuttable or otherwise) of invalidity is warranted under the Public Use Clause." Id. at 493.

238. See supra notes 104–106 and accompanying text.

239. See supra notes 87–100 and accompanying text.

developer a permit.\textsuperscript{241} In both cases, different district courts concluded that there was federal jurisdiction over the fills.\textsuperscript{242} The Sixth Circuit affirmed because one of the cases involved wetlands "adjacent" to navigable waters, and the other involved a wetland that had a hydrological connection to a navigable water.\textsuperscript{243}

\textsuperscript{241} See Carabell v. United States Army Corps of Eng'rs, 391 F.3d 704, 705–07 (6th Cir. 2004).
\textsuperscript{242} See Carabell, 391 F.3d at 707; Rapanos, 376 F.3d at 634.
\textsuperscript{243} Carabell, 391 F.3d at 709–10 (affirming a lower court decision upholding a Corps decision not to grant a permit to fill a wetland that was adjacent to a tributary to navigable waters); Rapanos, 376 F.3d at 629 (affirming the district court decision that held that a developer was required to apply for a permit to fill several wetlands).

Under the Clean Water Act (CWA), landowners are prohibited from discharging fill into the "navigable waters" without first obtaining a permit from the Corps. 33 U.S.C. § 1344(a) (2006). For the purposes of the CWA, "navigable waters" include a much greater scope of waters than navigable-in-fact waterways, as the CWA defines the term to encompass "waters of the United States, including the territorial seas." 33 U.S.C. § 1362(7). And, the statute's legislative history indicated that the term should be construed to the fullest extent of federal Commerce Clause jurisdiction. See S. CONF. REP. NO. 92-1236 at 2 (1972), reprinted in 1972 U.S.C.C.A.N. 3776, 3821 (amending the original Senate bill to define the term "navigable waters"); S. REP. NO. 92-414 at 2 (1971), reprinted in 1972 U.S.C.C.A.N. 3668, 3773 (calling for enlarging the federal role in water pollution control to include navigable waters, groundwater, and waters of the contiguous zone).

The Corps and EPA issued substantively identical longstanding regulations defining the scope of "waters of the United States" for purposes of CWA jurisdiction to include: "(1) All waters which are currently used, or were used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce, including all waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide; (2) All interstate waters including interstate wetlands; (3) All other waters such as intrastate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds, the use, degradation or destruction of which could affect interstate or foreign commerce ... (4) All impoundments of waters otherwise defined as waters of the United States under the definition; (5) Tributaries of waters identified in paragraphs (a)(1) through (4) of this section; (6) The territorial seas; (7) Wetlands adjacent to waters (other than waters that are themselves wetlands) identified in paragraphs (a)(1) through (6) of this section." 33 C.F.R. § 328.3(a) (2006) (the Corps' regulations); see also 40 C.F.R. § 122.2 (2007) (the EPA regulations).

These regulations have been the source of a number of recent challenges to the Corps' jurisdiction over wetlands, most notably in Solid Waste Agency of Cook County v. United States Army Corps of Engineers (SWANCC), 531 U.S. 159 (2001), where the Supreme Court invalidated Corps' jurisdiction over so-called "isolated" waters that provide habitat for migratory birds (the Migratory Bird Rule). Id. at 174. Lower courts have split over how broadly the holding in SWANCC applies. The Fifth Circuit narrowly construed the scope of Corps' jurisdiction by requiring findings that a wetland is "truly" adjacent to a jurisdictional water. See In re Needham, 354 F.3d 340, 345–46 (5th Cir. 2003). Other circuits interpreted SWANCC to have no limiting effect on Corps' wetlands jurisdiction beyond invalidating the Migratory Bird Rule. See Rapanos, 376 F.3d at 638. As the Sixth Circuit noted in Carabell, SWANCC did not overrule the Supreme Court's earlier decision upholding Corps' jurisdiction over "adjacent wetlands" in United States v. Riverside Bayview Homes, Inc., 474 U.S. 121, 135 (1985). See Carabell, 391 F.3d at 709.
A divided Supreme Court split 4-1-4. Characteristically, Justice Kennedy was the pivotal vote. Justice Scalia’s opinion for a four-member plurality would have swept away thirty years of consistent Clean Water Act (CWA) interpretation, relying on a 1954 dictionary to conclude that federal jurisdiction was restricted to “those relatively permanent, standing or continuously flowing bodies of water ‘forming geographic features’ that are described in ordinary parlance as ‘streams[,]... oceans, rivers, [and] lakes.’” This interpretation would have precluded federal regulation of intermittent or ephemeral bodies of water that are not permanent or continuously flowing—characteristic of many Western streams—in the service of the plurality’s view of protecting state and local authority allegedly threatened by federal CWA jurisdiction.

But, Justice Kennedy—whose opinion was controlling, as Chief Justice Roberts made clear—was unwilling to rely on a half-century old dictionary to resolve such an important question of federal jurisdiction. Instead, he concluded that the Sixth Circuit correctly


245. Id. at 2225.

246. Id. at 2236 (Roberts, C.J., concurring) (noting that “[l]ower courts and regulated entities will now have to feel their way on a case-by-case basis,” but “[t]his situation is certainly not unprecedented” under Marks v. United States, 430 U.S. 188, 193 (1977), “[w]hen a fragmented Court decides a case and no single rationale explaining the result enjoys the assent of five Justices, ‘the holding of the Court may be viewed as that position taken by those Members who concurred in the judgments on the narrowest grounds...’” (quoting Gregg v. Georgia, 428 U.S. 153, 169 n. 15 (1976) (opinion of Stewart, Powell, and Stevens, JJ.)). Lower courts are now wrestling with what to make of the rule in Rapanos.

One of the first post-Rapanos district courts to reach a wetlands jurisdictional determination interpreted the fragmented decision to indicate that courts should find Corps’ jurisdiction if a wetland meets either Kennedy’s “significant nexus” standard or the plurality’s “continuous surface connection” test. See United States v. Evans, No. 3:05CR159J32HTS, 2006 WL 2221629, at *20-21 (M.D. Fla. 2006). The First Circuit agreed in United States v. Johnson, 467 F.3d 56, 60 (1st Cir. 2006) (either the Rapanos plurality’s test or Kennedy’s test is sufficient for federal jurisdiction). But, both the Ninth and Seventh Circuits upheld federal jurisdiction based only on Kennedy’s test. N. Cal. River Watch v. City of Healdsburg, No. 04-15442, _ F.3d __, 2007 WL 2230186 (9th Cir. 2007) (applying Justice Kennedy’s “significant nexus” test to determine jurisdiction over a pond adjacent to a river, and finding that “nexus” in the form of a surface connection between water seeping over a man-man levee from the pond into the river as well as the fact that the pond water significantly affects the physical, biological, and chemical integrity of the adjacent river); United States v. Gerke Excavating, 464 F.3d 723, 725 (7th Cir. 2006) (employing Kennedy’s test as “the least common denominator,” because the court thought it would be a “rare case” where the Rapanos plurality and dissent would both find jurisdiction but Justice Kennedy would not).
determined that a wetland is subject to federal jurisdiction if it possessed a "significant nexus" to navigable waters, but that the appeals court had failed to consider all the factors necessary to ascertain whether the wetland in fact had the requisite nexus. Kennedy claimed that "in most cases regulation of wetlands that are adjacent to tributaries and possess a significant nexus with navigable waters will raise no serious constitutional or federalism difficulty," adding that "[t]he possibility of legitimate Commerce Clause and federalism concerns in some circumstances does not require the adoption of an interpretation that departs in all cases from the Act’s text and structure."248

Kennedy’s concurrence had much more in common with Justice Stevens’s dissent, which called for judicial deference to longstanding and reasonable administrative practice, than with the plurality. Kennedy even referred to the plurality opinion as "inconsistent with the Act’s text, structure and purpose," a rather curious conclusion in a concurrence. He spelled out the "significant nexus" test he called for in the following terms:

[W]etlands possess the requisite nexus, and thus come within the statutory phrase “navigable waters,” if the wetlands either alone or in combination with similarly situated lands in the region,

247. Rapanos, 126 S. Ct. at 2236 (Kennedy, J., concurring). Chief Justice Rehnquist first brought the phrase “significant nexus” into the Court’s wetlands jurisprudence when he wrote in his SWANCC opinion that “[i]t was the significant nexus between the wetlands and ‘navigable waters’ that informed our reading of the CWA in Riverside Bayview Homes.” SWANCC, 531 U.S. at 167.

248. Rapanos, 126 S. Ct. at 2249–50. Kennedy seemed to have exempted wetlands adjacent to navigable waters from his “significant nexus” showing: “As applied to wetlands adjacent to navigable-in-fact waters, the Corps’ conclusive standard for jurisdiction rests upon a reasonable inference ecologic interconnection, and the assertion of jurisdiction for those wetlands is sustainable under the Act by showing adjacency alone. That is the holding of Riverside Bayview.” Id. at 2248.

249. Rapanos, 126 S. Ct. at 2252–53 (Stevens, J., dissenting). Justice Stevens wrote for himself and Justices Souter, Ginsburg, and Breyer. Id. at 2252.

250. Id. at 2246. Moreover, Kennedy noted that because “the dissent is correct to observe that an intermittent flow can constitute a stream, . . . [i]t follows that the Corps can reasonably interpret the Act to cover the paths of such impermanent streams.” Id. at 2243. Also, he observed that the plurality’s conclusion that navigable waters may not be intermittent was "unsound." Id. at 2243. And, he agreed with the dissent that “the fact that point sources may carry continuous flow undermines the plurality’s conclusion that covered ‘waters’ under the Act may not be discontinuous.” Id. at 2243. Finally, he rejected the plurality’s exclusion of wetlands lacking a continuous surface connection to other jurisdictional waters. Id. at 2244. See also Donald Kennedy & Brook Hanson, What’s a Wetland, Anyhow?, 313 SCIENCE no. 5790, at 1019 (Aug. 25, 2006) (criticizing Justice Scalia for looking to a dictionary, rather than to contemporary environmental science—as Justice Kennedy did—in ascertaining the scope of federal wetlands jurisdiction in Rapanos).
significantly affect the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of other covered waters more readily understood as "navigable." When, in contrast, wetlands' effects on water quality are speculative or insubstantial, they fall outside the zone fairly encompassed by the statutory term "navigable waters."  

Kennedy faulted existing Corps regulations for their "overbreadth" and called for new regulations concerning wetlands that are adjacent to tributaries of navigable waters, to ensure the requisite ecological connection. Pending the promulgation of such regulations, the Corps would have to make jurisdictional determinations on a case-by-case basis.

Kennedy did not conclude that the wetlands at issue in Rapanos were beyond regulatory reach. In fact, he suggested that they were probably jurisdictional wetlands, noting that "the record contains evidence suggesting the possible existence of a significant nexus according to the principles outlined above. Thus the end result in these cases and many others to be considered by the Corps may be the same as that suggested by the dissent." Why, in light of these sentiments, Kennedy concurred in the plurality opinion was not at all clear.

D. Kennedy’s Environmental Record, 2005–2006

Justice Kennedy’s recent decisions should come as no surprise to those carefully studying his environmental record. His view that the takings clause should not be invoked to question the substantive merits of legislation, first articulated in Eastern Enterprises, finally prevailed

251. Rapanos, 126 S. Ct. at 2248.
252. Id. at 2248–49 (calling for the Corps "to identify categories of tributaries that, due to their volume of flow (either annually or on average), their proximity to navigable waters, or other relevant considerations, are significant enough that wetlands adjacent to them are likely, in the majority of cases, to perform important functions for an aquatic system incorporating navigable waters.") He specifically approved the Corps’ existing regulations concerning wetlands adjacent to navigable waters because there was "a reasonable inference of ecological interconnection" with navigable waters. Id. at 2248.
253. Id. at 2249.
254. Id. at 2250. See Bradford C. Mank, Implementing Rapanos—Will Justice Kennedy’s Significant Nexus Test Provide a Workable Standard for Lower Courts, Regulators, and Developers?, 40 IND. L. REV. 291, 348 (2007) (predicting that the significant nexus test will only modestly affect the scope of federal jurisdiction because of its emphasis on ecological considerations, not merely hydrological connections).
in *Lingle*, as the Court reversed itself unanimously. In both *Kelo* and *Rapanos*, Kennedy’s concurrences were outcome determinative for a fractured Court. Characteristically, in *Kelo*, he called for a multi-factor test to determine the validity of condemnations for economic development. In *Rapanos*, he wanted the government to show the existence of a significant ecological nexus between wetlands and navigable waters as a predicate for federal regulation. Such fact-intensive inquires are, of course, a Kennedy trademark.

V. THE KENNEDY PROFILE

The chronology above illustrates Justice Kennedy’s essential role in environmental cases in the twenty-first century. In the twelve years between 1988 and 2000, Kennedy wrote only nine environmental law opinions, or just .75 per year. In the six years since 2000, Kennedy wrote eight environmental law decisions, or 1.3 per year, an increase of roughly seventy-five percent. Moreover, Kennedy’s role is increasingly determinative: of the twenty post-2000 decisions examined in this study, five were decided on 5-4 votes, and Kennedy was in the majority in all but one. And, of course, Kennedy has written only one environmental dissent.

258. See *Rapanos*, 126 S. Ct. at 1236, 2248–50, discussed supra notes 247–254 and accompanying text.
259. See supra §§ III–IV.
260. See supra §§ IV–V.
261. See *Palazzolo* v. Rhode Island, 533 U.S. 606, 610 (2001) (writing for a majority that included Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justices O’Connor, Scalia, and Thomas, and which Justice Stevens also joined in part); Solid Waste Agency of N. Cook County v. U.S. Army Corps of Eng’rs, 531 U.S. 159, 161 (2001) (joining Chief Justice Rehnquist’s majority, which was also joined by Justices Thomas, Scalia, and O’Connor); *Kelo*, 545 U.S. at 471 (filing a concurring opinion and joining Justice Stevens’s majority opinion, which was also joined by Justices Souter, Ginsburg, and Breyer); and *Rapanos*, 126 S. Ct. at 2214 (concurring in the judgment, but filing a separate concurring opinion from the plurality authored by Justice Scalia and joined by Chief Justice Roberts and Justices Alito and Thomas). Justice Kennedy’s pivotal role in wetlands cases can be also deduced from the 4-4 result in a California wetlands case from which he had recused himself. *Borden Ranch* v. U.S. Army Corps of Eng’rs, 537 U.S. 99, 100 (2002) (affirming the Ninth Circuit’s decision that EPA had jurisdiction to enforce the CWA when a developer engaged in “deep ripping”—intensive and very deep plowing through water features—without a permit on a former ranch with numerous water and wetland features, although that jurisdiction did not extend to
But, this chronological presentation, while useful in understanding the development of Justice Kennedy's thinking and in illustrating his growing importance to the Court's environmental law decisionmaking, may fail to capture the contributions Justice Kennedy's opinions have made in discrete areas of environmental law. The four areas to which he has most prominently contributed are 1) standing and ripeness, 2) states'-rights federalism, 3) takings, and 4) environmental statutory interpretation. This section discusses each subject area in turn.

A. Standing and Ripeness

Three standing cases figure prominently in Kennedy's environmental portfolio: his concurrences in *Defenders* and *Laidlaw* and his majority opinion in *Del Monte Dunes*. In *Defenders*, one of Justice Kennedy's more telling early opinions, he was unwilling to join in Justice Scalia's dismissive treatment of the plaintiffs' "animal and vocational nexus" theories of standing, reserving the right to consider them at a later date, under other facts. He also rejected the Scalian proposition that Congress could not establish standing for new causes of action.

In *Del Monte Dunes*, Justice Kennedy's majority opinion rejected the application of the more stringent "rough proportionality" test employed in exaction cases, but upheld the lower court's submission of the takings claim to a jury. And, his odd concurrence in *Laidlaw* suggested that citizen suits might violate the executive prerogatives contained in Article II of the Constitution. The Kennedy standing record is thus a mixed bag—as is the Court's record in general—perhaps reflecting his...
reaction to the substantive merits of the underlying environmental claim. His intimation in *Laidlaw* about possible limits on Congress's ability to authorize civil penalties in citizen suits to protect the Executive's Article II powers has to be of considerable concern for environmental plaintiffs.269

Kennedy's chief ripeness decision was *Palazzolo*, in which his majority opinion concluded that rejection of the landowner's repeated development applications indicated that the state was unlikely to ever approve his proposed development, and therefore the takings claim was ripe.270 Kennedy's *Del Monte Dunes* majority decision did not disturb a lower court decision that found the city's numerous denials of a beach development to be ripe.271 He clearly is quite interested in removing ripeness burdens to landowners who submit numerous proposals to local governments and claim that repeated governmental rejections work takings.272

Kennedy appears to be fairly evenhanded in his standing and ripeness decisions. While opposed to setting high hurdles for landowners claiming takings, he does not adhere to the Scalian common law model.273 He is willing to entertain animal and vocational nexus theories of standing,274 and he believes that Congress has the authority to define
injuries and chains of causation sufficient for standing.\(^ {275}\) Although he has raised questions about civil penalties in citizen suits as possibly unconstitutionally interfering with the Executive’s Article II prerogatives,\(^ {276}\) he seems largely committed to allowing both landowners and citizen enforcers to have their day in court.\(^ {277}\)

\textit{B. States’ Rights Federalism}

Justice Kennedy’s interest in federalism is considerably greater than his interest in environmental protection.\(^ {278}\) But, his record is a mixed one. His early concurrence in\textit{ Gade} supplied the deciding vote to preempt an Illinois hazardous waste-worker training statute, apparently viewing the avoidance of dual regulation as a higher priority than preserving state police power.\(^ {279}\) This concurrence advocated a broader preemption—based on the text of the statute—than the conflict preemption endorsed by Justice O’Connor’s plurality opinion.\(^ {280}\) Similarly, Kennedy’s majority opinion in\textit{ Locke} preempted Washington state tanker safety regulations not on the basis of federal-state conflicts but on his interpretation of federal policy.\(^ {281}\)

Kennedy’s first environmental law decision for the Court,\textit{ Carbone}, was also surprising for a professed states’ rights advocate.\(^ {282}\) He viewed the town of Clarkstown’s ordinance, aimed at promoting recycling, as a protectionist measure that interfered with the flow of interstate commerce, not as a measure aimed at managing the town’s waste problems.\(^ {283}\) This perception led this professed states’ rights defender to conclude that the local recycling ordinance substantially interfered with his expansive notion of the dormant federal commerce power.\(^ {284}\)

\(^{275}\) See supra note 73 and accompanying text (discussing\textit{ Defenders}, 504 U.S. 555).

\(^{276}\) See supra note 159 and accompanying text (discussing\textit{ Friends of the Earth, Inc. v. Laidlaw Envtl. Servs., Inc.}, 528 U.S. 167 (2000)).

\(^{277}\) See supra notes 71–73, 178, and accompanying text (discussing\textit{ Defenders}, 504 U.S. 555, and\textit{ Palazzolo v. Rhode Island}, 533 U.S. 606 (2001)).

\(^{278}\) See supra note 20 (discussing the Rehnquist Court’s limitations on the federal commerce power and the Eleventh Amendment revolution during the mid-1990s).

\(^{279}\) See supra note 80 and accompanying text.

\(^{280}\) See supra note 79.

\(^{281}\) See supra notes 161–171.


\(^{283}\) See supra notes 85–86 and accompanying text.

\(^{284}\) See supra note 86.
These surprising decisions favoring federal hegemony stand in contrast to the more prototypical Kennedy states’ rights position exemplified in his 1997 Coeur d’Alene Tribe majority opinion, in which he broadly interpreted state immunity from suits and read narrowly an apparently relevant exemption from this liability.\(^{285}\) His endorsement of case-by-case balancing concerning the applicability of state Eleventh Amendment immunity from federal suits was not shared by Justice O’Connor, who thought that federal jurisdiction should not be premised on judicial balancing of federal versus state interests in suits seeking prospective relief.\(^{286}\) Kennedy’s unsympathetic approach to tribal property issues was again evident two years later, when his opinion for the Court rejected the Southern Ute Tribe’s claim to coalbed methane gas reserves.\(^{287}\) In so doing, he ignored interpretative rules favoring tribes and federal retention of public resources in favor of what he viewed as a “natural interpretation” of the definition of coal from ninety years earlier.\(^{288}\) And, Kennedy’s states’ rights perspective dominated the only environmental dissent he wrote, as he overlooked the text of the Clean Air Act and deference to the EPA’s interpretation of the statute in favor of promoting his vision of an active state role in environmental policy.\(^{289}\)

Kennedy’s states’ rights federalism is certainly a hallmark of his jurisprudence,\(^{290}\) but his states’-rights philosophy has clear bounds. He is


\(^{286}\) See supra note 98 and accompanying text.

\(^{287}\) Amoco Prod. Co. v. S. Ute Indian Tribe, 526 U.S. 865 (1999), discussed supra notes 130–137 and accompanying text. While Amoco does not directly address states’ rights, it nonetheless reflects Kennedy’s attitudes toward federalism. Although not parties to the suit, western states stood to lose considerable tax revenue if the Tenth Circuit’s holding in favor of the tribe was upheld. The states of Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming submitted an amicus brief to the Court in support of the oil company, emphasizing the hardship the states would experience if they were to lose tax revenue collected from the oil companies. Brief for the State of Mont. et al. as Amici Curiae Supporting Petitioners at 16, Amoco Prod. Co. v. S. Ute Indian Tribe, 526 U.S. 865 (1999) (1999 WL 115533).

\(^{288}\) See supra notes 135–136 and accompanying text.


\(^{290}\) Among Kennedy’s states’-rights contributions was his deciding vote in United States v. Lopez, 514 U.S. 549 (1995), a non-environmental decision striking down the federal Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990 as beyond the power of the Commerce Clause, the first time in sixty years the Court found a federal statute to exceed the commerce power. Kennedy’s concurrence (joined by Justice O’Connor) emphasized that gun possession lacked commercial character and that
more than willing to preempt state statutes, even where they do not directly conflict with federal law. And, his broad interpretation of the dormant Commerce Clause allowed him to strike down a recycling ordinance as protectionist in *Carbone*, even though the restrictions imposed by the ordinance were felt more in-state than out-of-state. On the other hand, Kennedy’s states’ rights pedigree was evident in his expansive view of state immunity from federal suit in *Coeur d’Alene Tribe*. He also overlooked both federal land and Indian law canons of interpretation in rejecting the Southern Ute Tribe’s claims to coaled methane gas, in an anti-federal, if not a states’ rights opinion. And, his interpretation of the Clean Air Act would have effectively allowed a state to displace federal action. So, although Kennedy is a card-carrying member of the states’ rights club, he has shown a proclivity to dispense with state police power where not doing so might produce dual regulation.

C. Takings

The aggressiveness evident in Justice Kennedy’s standing and federalism opinions is not very apparent in his approach to takings, which instead has been characterized by moderation. In *Lucas*, he refused to join Justice Scalia’s effort to erect a significant categorical takings rule, opting instead in a concurrence for a litmus test grounded on reasonable landowner expectations that could account for changed conditions, new ecological understandings, and protection of what he termed “fragile lands.” This sort of fact-intensive inquiry is characteristic of Kennedy’s takings jurisprudence.

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297. *See supra* note 64 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy’s affinity for fact-specific
A fidelity to factual analysis also helps to explain Justice Kennedy’s concurrence in Eastern Enterprises, in which he refused to apply a takings analysis concerning apparently retroactive legislation, choosing instead to conclude that the statute failed to satisfy substantive due process.298 Kennedy reiterated his desire to employ substantive due process analysis in his Lingle concurrence.299 This willingness to employ substantive due process to review the wisdom of legislation echoed the distrust of Congress reflected in his suggestion in Laidlaw that congressionally authorized civil penalties in citizen suits might intrude on the Executive’s Article II powers.300

Kennedy’s interest in ensuring that landowners get their day in court motivated his ripeness ruling in Palazzolo,301 when he eliminated the so-called “notice rule” that gave governments a categorical defense against takings claims, referring to the government as Hobbesian.302 He also approved jury determinations of takings claims in Del Monte Dunes, while refusing to apply a “rough proportionality” test outside the exactions area.303

Another Kennedy concurrence supplied the decisive vote in Kelo, ratifying public use takings for economic development.304 But, he objected to the plurality’s call for great judicial deference to the city’s redevelopment plan, calling for a “careful and extensive inquiry” to


299. Lingle v. Chevron, 544 U.S. 528, 548–49 (2005) (Kennedy, J., concurring); see supra note 223 and accompanying text.


301. See supra notes 172–186 and accompanying text.

302. Palazzolo v. Rhode Island, 533 U.S. 606, 627 (2001); see supra note 179 and accompanying text. Thomas Hobbes was an English philosopher who wrote Leviathan in 1651, which suggests that man may avoid destructive wars through social contracts that establish governments as absolute authorities. According to the Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, Hobbesian refers to the theory that “absolutism in government is necessary to prevent the warfare of each against all to which natural selfishness inevitably leads mankind.” WEBSTER’S NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY 544 (1973).


ensure that the public benefits were substantial and the private benefits incidental.\textsuperscript{305} This sort of fact-based scrutiny is, of course, familiar.\textsuperscript{306}

Kennedy’s commitment to contextualism is quite evident in the takings cases. In \textit{Lucas}, he opposed categorical decisionmaking because it was not sensitive to changes in ecological understandings and fragile lands.\textsuperscript{307} Factual analysis was also central to his acceptance of eminent domain for economic development\textsuperscript{308} and for determining whether a regulation “substantively advance[d]” a public purpose, a test he convinced the Court was more appropriate for substantive due process than takings analysis.\textsuperscript{309} He also wrote the Court’s opinion approving juries as determiners of whether the application of a regulation to a property produces a taking.\textsuperscript{310} On the other hand, Kennedy refused to approve a categorical taking rule in \textit{Del Monte Dunes},\textsuperscript{311} and his conception of the scope of the exception to the categorical rule created in \textit{Lucas} was much more expansive than Justice Scalia’s.\textsuperscript{312} Thus, while Kennedy may sympathize with the Lockean landowner confronted by the Hobbesian state,\textsuperscript{313} he is unwilling to side with the landowner categorically.

\textbf{D. Environmental Statutory Interpretation}

Justice Kennedy’s review of environmental legislation is probably best characterized as indifferent. He has written only a couple of influential opinions: his sole environmental dissent and the deciding opinion in the 2006 wetlands case. In \textit{Alaska Department of

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{305} See supra note 236 and accompanying text.
\bibitem{306} See, e.g., supra notes 246–254, infra notes 307–310, 318 and accompanying text.
\bibitem{307} See supra notes 60–61 and accompanying text (discussing \textit{Lucas v. S.C. Coastal Council}, 505 U.S. 1003 (1992)).
\bibitem{308} See supra notes 235–237 and accompanying text (discussing \textit{Kelo}, 545 U.S. 469).
\bibitem{310} See supra notes 119–122 and accompanying text (discussing \textit{City of Monterey v. Del Monte Dunes at Monterey, Ltd.}, 526 U.S. 687 (1998)).
\bibitem{311} See supra note 117 and accompanying text (rejecting application of the \textit{Dolan} “rough proportionality” rule).
\bibitem{312} See supra notes 58 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy’s concurrence in \textit{Lucas}, 505 U.S. 1003).
\bibitem{313} See supra note 179 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy’s opinion in \textit{Palazzolo v. Rhode Island}, 533 U.S. 606 (2001)).
\end{thebibliography}
Environmental Conservation, Kennedy's dissent objected to the federal EPA effectively overturning the state's interpretation of "best available control technology" under the Clean Air Act. He seemed especially concerned that under the EPA's—and the majority's—interpretation, both the federal and state governments could actively enforce the statute simultaneously, inconsistent with his understanding of cooperative federalism. But because simultaneous enforcement by the federal and state governments has long characterized implementation of environmental statutes like the Clean Air Act, Kennedy's complaint seemed more appropriate for a legislator than a judge.

The wetlands case, Rapanos, concerning the scope of Clean Water Act jurisdiction, appeared to animate Justice Kennedy, who again supplied the pivotal vote. Quite predictably, although he thought the Corps of Engineers' regulations were overbroad, his solution was individualized fact-finding to establish a "significant nexus" between the wetland at issue and navigable waters. Although this search may impose considerable administrative burdens on the regulatory agencies, the workability of Kennedy's nexus requirement was not his concern.

Although there are not many Kennedy environmental statutory interpretations, those that exist reinforce Kennedy's commitment to state autonomy, which is clearly more important to him than administrative deference or environmental protection. Also reinforced was perhaps the overarching theme of Kennedy's jurisprudence: a commitment to judicial factual inquiry in the form of a search for nexus.

315. See supra notes 194-197 and accompanying text.
316. See, e.g., Joel Mintz, The Future of Environmental Enforcement: A Reply to Paddock, 21 ENVTL. L. 1543 (1991) (arguing that federal-state enforcement provisions will continue to rely on federal enforcement); Robert L. Glicksman, From Cooperative to Inoperative Federalism: The Perverse Mutation of Environmental Law and Policy, 41 WAKE FOREST L. REV. 719, 777 (2006) (discussing the ways in which the Supreme Court has narrowed enforcement of federal environmental laws in recent years).
319. See supra notes 194-203 and accompanying text (discussing Alaska Dep't of Envtl. Conservation, 540 U.S. 461 (2004)).
320. See supra notes 246-254 and accompanying text (discussing Rapanos, 126 S. Ct. 2208).
CONCLUSION

This study reveals Justice Anthony Kennedy to be a jurist skeptical of sweeping doctrinal changes and attached to incremental case-by-case decisionmaking, in which judges are entrusted with balancing tests and charged with explaining the connection between doctrine and context. Kennedy may be a doctrinal minimalist, but he is not a judicial minimalist: he possesses considerable faith in the judiciary’s ability to balance factors like environmental protection, economic profit, and individual liberty.

Kennedy’s willingness to entertain nexus theories of citizen standing and his acknowledgment of congressionally-created standing reflect his commitment to judicial decisionmaking, although he has questioned the constitutionality of citizen suits under Article II. On the other hand, he is impatient with government allegations that landowners’ takings claims are not ripe. He is eager for takings claimants to have their day in court, and he is willing to have juries decide takings cases.

Kennedy’s devotion to case-by-case balancing was evident in his rejection of the “notice rule,” which had given government defendants in takings cases a categorical defense prior to his Palazzolo opinion. He was also skeptical of the breadth of the categorical takings doctrine Justice Scalia announced in Lucas. Kennedy instead called for a broad exception to categorical takings that would consider contextual factors like changed conditions and sensitive lands. Such factors can also be balanced in substantive due process analysis, which Kennedy has sought to revive as a partial antidote to an expanded takings doctrine.

321. See supra notes 70–73 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy’s concurrence in Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife, 504 U.S. 555 (1992)).
322. See supra notes 159–160 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy’s concurrence in Friends of the Earth, Inc. v. Laidlaw Envtl. Servs., Inc., 528 U.S. 167 (2000)).
323. See supra note 178 and accompanying text (discussing Palazzolo v. Rhode Island, 533 U.S. 606 (2001)).
324. See supra notes 119–123 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy’s majority opinion in City of Monterey v. Del Monte Dunes at Monterey, Ltd., 526 U.S. 687 (1998), upholding the lower court’s decision to submit a takings claim to a jury).
325. See supra notes 179–181 and accompanying text (discussing the Court’s rejection of the “notice rule” barring takings claims where a landowner acquired the property after the restrictive rule was in place as sufficient to defeat a takings claim in Palazzolo).
326. See supra notes 54–65 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy’s concurrence in Lucas v. S.C. Coastal Council, 505 U.S. 1003 (1992)).
327. See supra notes 103–104 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy’s concurrence in E
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Kennedy is a determined states’ rights enthusiast, a vital participant in the Rehnquist Court’s federalism revolution. He rejected Indian tribal land claims in favor of a broad application of state sovereign immunity under the Eleventh Amendment, and the only environmental dissent he has written was the product of his fidelity to states’ rights: Kennedy thought that the federal EPA should not overrule the state of Alaska’s regulatory decisions, despite statutory text apparently authorizing just that. Yet his Carbone decision showed him willing to invalidate a local recycling ordinance on Commerce Clause grounds, and he was quick to preempt Washington tanker safety and Illinois hazardous waste worker training laws. Kennedy’s devotion to states’ rights apparently does not extend to what he considers to be overregulation: while he prefers state regulation to federal regulation, he prefers one level of regulation to two, and the market to regulation. His states’ rights advocacy may actually be part of a larger deregulatory preference.

But, while Kennedy favors less regulation, he is not interested in dismantling all regulation. That is clear from his pivotal Rapanos concurrence, where he refused to agree with the plurality’s effort to categorically scale back Clean Water Act jurisdiction, instead (and quite characteristically) opting for case-by-case determinations of the relationship between wetlands and navigable waters. He also approved economic development condemnations in his deciding Kelo concurrence, although characteristically he would have established a detailed fact-

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328. See supra notes 19–20 and accompanying text (discussing the Rehnquist Court’s federalism revolution).

329. See supra notes 94–100 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy’s opinion refusing to apply the Ex parte Young exception to allow a suit filed by the Coeur d’Alene Tribe’s to proceed against the state of Idaho).


331. See supra notes 81–86 and accompanying text (discussing the decision in C & A Carbone v. Town of Clarkstown, 511 U.S. 383 (1994)).


333. See supra notes 247–254 and accompanying text (discussing the concurrence in Rapanos v. United States, ___U.S. ___ (June 19, 2006), 126 S. Ct. 2208 (2006)).
based inquiry to ascertain that the condemnation was not for impermissible private gain without public benefit.\footnote{334}{See supra notes 234–237 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy’s concurrence in \textit{Kelo} v. \textit{City of New London}, 545 U.S. 469 (2005)).}

Whether Justice Kennedy’s recent endorsement of environmental regulation is indicative of a trend is hardly clear. But, as long ago as 1992, he was fashioning rules to protect sensitive lands and to account for unforeseen changes.\footnote{335}{See supra notes 54–61 and accompanying text (discussing Kennedy’s concurrence in \textit{Lucas} v. \textit{S.C. Coastal Council}, 505 U.S. 1003 (1992), which recognized that changed conditions and ecological concerns may frustrate some takings claims and justify land use regulations).} He is certainly not as sensitive to environmental protection as he is to fact-based decisionmaking, states’ rights, or minimal regulation.\footnote{336}{See Cannon, \textit{supra} note 7 (noting that Kennedy voted for the position benefiting the environment just 34.1 percent of the time in environmental cases).} But, he is not reflexively anti-regulation. Because of his devotion to private property rights,\footnote{337}{See supra note 26 and accompanying text (discussing extrajudicial remarks Kennedy has made in support of private property rights).} perhaps the best way to characterize Justice Kennedy is as someone who, while not dismissive of environmental regulation, will subject it to hard-look judicial review. The architects of hard-look review would not likely have anticipated its application against environmental regulation,\footnote{338}{Hard-look judicial review emerged during the 1970s when the D.C. Circuit, in response to a substantial increase in administrative law cases, began to emphasize review of the substance of agency decisions, not merely the procedure. \textit{See} Reuel Schiller, Rulemaking’s Promise: Administrative Law and Legal Culture in the 1960s and 1970s, 53 ADMIN. L. REV. 1139, 1156 (2001) (describing the advent of hard-look review in D.C. Circuit Judge Leventhal’s opinion in \textit{Greater Boston Television Corp. v. FCC}, 444 F.2d 841 (D.C. Cir. 1970)); \textit{see also} Harold Leventhal, \textit{Environmental Decisionmaking and the Role of the Courts}, 122 U. PENN. L. REV. 509, 555 (1974) (advocating that courts subject federal agency environmental decisions to “hard look” in order to ensure “the principled integration and balanced assessment of both environmental and nonenvironmental considerations in federal agency decisionmaking”); Abraham Chayes, \textit{The Role of the Judge in Public Law Litigation}, 89 HARV. L. REV. 1281, 1284 (1976) (discussing the emergence of “public law litigation”—civil disputes over constitutional or statutory questions, rather than private party litigation—and the development of a more active judicial role in such cases).} but that may well portend its future in the Roberts Court.

At the end of the day, Justice Kennedy seems to be Holmesian in several respects. Like Justice Holmes,\footnote{339}{See Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., \textit{The Path of the Law}, 10 HARV. L. REV. 457, 467 (1897) (“I think that the judges themselves have failed adequately to recognize their duty of weighing considerations of social advantage. The duty is inevitable, and the result of the often proclaimed judicial aversion to deal with such considerations is simply to leave the very ground and foundations of judgments inarticulate, and often unconscious . . . .”). \textit{See also} MORTON J. HORWITZ, THE} he is a devoted case-by-case
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balancer. He is also skeptical of regulatory improvement, but he is largely unwilling to impede regulatory innovation. And, like Holmes, he is relatively non-ideological, except that his commitment to states’ rights is quite un-Holmesian, making Kennedy’s jurisprudence appear much more activistic than Holmes’s call for judicial restraint. Still, when Holmes wrote, “the life of the law has not been logic: it has been experience” as a critique of Christopher Columbus Langdell’s jurisprudence, he could have been describing Justice Kennedy’s attitude toward Justice Scalia. Holmes’s critique may very well help explain the divide between the two justices. How this divide—between Scalia’s categorical distinctions and Kennedy’s fact-based consequentialism—plays out may well characterize the nature of the environmental jurisprudence that the Roberts Court has begun to create.


341. See, e.g., Lochner v. New York, 198 U.S. 45, 75 (1905) (Holmes, J., dissenting) (“This case is decided upon an economic theory which a large part of the country does not entertain. If it were a question whether I agreed with that theory, I should desire to study it further and long before making up my mind. But I do not conceive that to be my duty, because I strongly believe that my agreement or disagreement has nothing to do with the right of a majority to embody their opinions in law.”). On Holmes’s commitment to judicial restraint and to majoritarianism, see G. Edward White, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes: Law and the Inner Self 327–30, 343, 363, 391, 487 (1993).


APPENDIX A:
Supreme Court Environmental Decisions 1989–2007

344. This case table includes environmental decisions issued by the Court during Kennedy’s tenure. Case names which appear in boldface type indicate decisions in which Kennedy wrote an opinion. Although the overall vote count was not included for each decision, the table does note which cases which were decided with a slim five-member majority. A small number of cases included in the tabular data indicate Kennedy wrote an opinion for the case, but are not discussed in the article text. These decisions are marked with an *. We omitted these cases from the discussion either because while the decision had a significant effect on environmental law, the case itself did not involve environmental issues (United States v. Lopez; City of Bourne v. Flores), or because the decision involved an original jurisdiction state boundary dispute (Louisiana v. Mississippi; Alaska v. United States).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Case name</th>
<th>Citation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Pennsylvania v. Union Gas Co.</td>
<td>491 U.S. 1</td>
<td>Joined in both Justice White’s and Justice Scalia’s partial dissents from the 5-4 decision</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens Council</td>
<td>490 U.S. 332</td>
<td>Joined unanimous majority</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>Marsh v. Oregon Natural Resources Council</td>
<td>490 U.S. 360</td>
<td>Joined unanimous majority</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>Cotton Petroleum Corp v. New Mexico</td>
<td>490 U.S. 163</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>Hallstrom v. Tillamook County</td>
<td>493 U.S. 20</td>
<td>Joined majority</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>General Motors Corp. v. United States</td>
<td>496 U.S. 530</td>
<td>Joined majority</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Oklahoma v. New Mexico</td>
<td>501 U.S. 221</td>
<td>Joined parts of the majority opinion and also Chief Justice Rehnquist’s partial concurrence and dissent</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>Arkansas v. Oklahoma</td>
<td>503 U.S. 91</td>
<td>Joined unanimous majority</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>City of Burlington v. Dague</td>
<td>505 U.S. 557</td>
<td>Joined majority</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife</td>
<td>504 U.S. 555</td>
<td>Wrote opinion concurring in part and concurring in the judgment</td>
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<td>1992</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>New York v. United States</td>
<td>505 U.S. 144</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>Fort Gratiot Sanitary Landfill, Inc. v. Michigan Department of Natural Resources</td>
<td>504 U.S. 353</td>
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<td>1992</td>
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<td>503 U.S. 519</td>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>Nebraska v. Wyoming</td>
<td>507 U.S. 584</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>Key Tronic Corp. v. United States</td>
<td>511 U.S. 809</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>City of Chicago v. Environmental Defense</td>
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<td>1994</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>United States v. Lopez*</td>
<td>514 U.S. 549</td>
<td>Concurred in 5–4 majority opinion but wrote separate concurrence</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>Babbitt v. Sweet Home Chapter of Communities for a Great Oregon</td>
<td>515 U.S. 687</td>
<td>Joined majority</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td><strong>Louisiana v. Mississippi</strong></td>
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<td>Kansas v. Colorado</td>
<td>514 U.S. 673</td>
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<td>Nebraska v. Wyoming</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>Seminole Tribe of Florida v. Florida</td>
<td>517 U.S. 44</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>Meghrig v. KFC Western, Inc.</td>
<td>516 U.S. 479</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>Amchem Products, Inc. v. Windsor</td>
<td>521 U.S. 591</td>
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<td>1997</td>
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<td>520 U.S. 154</td>
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<td><strong>Idaho v. Coeur d’Alene Tribe of Idaho</strong></td>
<td>521 U.S. 261</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>Suitum v. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency</td>
<td>520 U.S. 725</td>
<td>Joined majority</td>
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<td>1997</td>
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<td>519 U.S. 234</td>
<td>Joined majority</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td><strong>City of Boerne v. Flores</strong></td>
<td>521 U.S. 507</td>
<td>Wrote majority</td>
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<td>Steel Co. v. Citizens for a Better Environment</td>
<td>523 U.S. 83</td>
<td>Joined majority and Justice O’Connor’s concurrence</td>
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<td>Ohio Forestry Association Inc. v. Sierra Club</td>
<td>523 U.S. 726</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>Eastern Enterprises v. Apfel</td>
<td>524 U.S. 498</td>
<td>Wrote opinion concurring with 4-member plurality’s judgment and dissented in part</td>
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<td>Amoco Production Co. v. Southern Ute Indian Tribe</td>
<td>526 U.S. 865</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>City of Monterey v. Del Monte Dunes at Monterey Ltd.</td>
<td>526 U.S. 687</td>
<td>Wrote unanimous decision with respect to certain parts of the opinion and a 5-4 majority with respect to other parts</td>
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<td>Friends of the Earth, Inc v. Laidlaw Environmental Services, Inc.</td>
<td>528 U.S. 167</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</td>
<td>531 U.S. 159</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Idaho v. United States</td>
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<td>Joined Chief Justice Rehnquist's dissent from a 5-4 decision</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Palazzolo v. Rhode Island</td>
<td>533 U.S. 606</td>
<td>Wrote 5-4 majority</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Borden Ranch Partnership v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</td>
<td>537 U.S. 99</td>
<td>Did not take part in the 4-4 decision</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation v. EPA</td>
<td>540 U.S. 461</td>
<td>Wrote dissent from 5-4 decision</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Engine Manufacturing Association v. South Coast Air Quality Management District</td>
<td>541 U.S. 246</td>
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<td>Cooper Industries, Inc. v. Aviall Services, Inc.</td>
<td>543 U.S. 157</td>
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<td>541 U.S. 752</td>
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<td>BedRoc Ltd., LLC v. United States</td>
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<td>Alaska v. United States*</td>
<td>545 U.S. 75</td>
<td>Wrote unanimous majority in part and majority with respect to other parts of opinion</td>
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<td>545 U.S. 469</td>
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<td>544 U.S. 528</td>
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