



# **Ecological Governance: Toward a New Social Contract with the Earth**

Bruce Jennings

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As our economic and natural systems continue on their collision course, Bruce Jennings asks whether we have the political capacity to avoid large-scale environmental disaster. Can liberal democracy, he wonders, respond in time to ecological challenges that require dramatic changes in the way we approach the natural world? Must a more effective governance be less democratic and more autocratic? Or can a new form of grassroots ecological democracy save us from ourselves and the false promises of material consumption run amok?

Ecological Governance is an ethicist's reckoning with how our political culture, broadly construed, must change in response to climate change. Jennings argues that during the Anthropocene era a social contract of consumption has been forged. Under it people have given political and economic control to elites in exchange for the promise of economic growth. In a new political economy of the future, the terms of the consumptive contract cannot be met without severe ecological damage. We will need a new guiding vision and collective aim, a new social contract of ecological trusteeship and responsibility.



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