

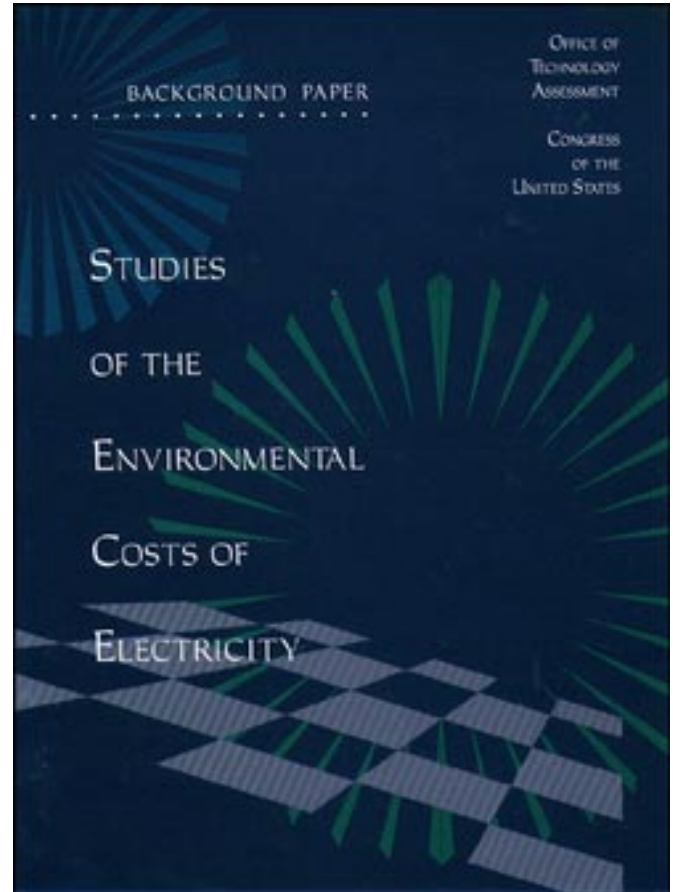
*Studies of the Environmental Costs of
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Foreword

S *tudies of the Environmental Costs of Electricity* examines studies that assign monetary value to the environmental effects of energy technologies. Quantitative analysis of environmental effects has been an important feature of energy policy for several decades, and growing numbers of studies attempt to integrate these analyses into an overall framework that allows comparison of the environmental effects of different technologies for generating electricity.

Because of the large size and scope of environmental cost studies, however, they necessarily involve a large number of assumptions. These assumptions have been the focus of contentious debate in the analytical and policy communities. While changing a study's assumptions can profoundly affect its results, there is currently no agreement on the most appropriate set of assumptions. This does not imply that all assumptions are equally valid, but indicates that assumptions often reflect deeply held values of participants in policy debates.

This report was prepared in response to a request by the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. The report examines a set of environmental cost studies, compares and contrasts their methods and assumptions, and discusses how they could be made more useful to federal policy makers. In contrast to other studies in this area, OTA'S report explores the close ties between values, assumptions, and quantitative results and the implications of these ties for policymaking.

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