

**GOVERNMENT FAILURE AND PUBLIC INDIFFERENCE:  
A PORTRAIT OF WATER POLLUTION IN ISRAEL**

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## Abstract

Given Israel's extensive water pollution legislation, why in light of the continual degradation of the country's water resources have these laws remained "law on the books" and not become "law in action"? And given the failure of Israel's institutional structure to enforce this legislation, why hasn't there been a public outcry against the government's long-term mismanagement that has resulted in the abuse and misuse of Israel's most precious natural resource? The thesis will review, examine and analyze the institutional enforcement structure to better understand its lack of will to act in the face of extensive pollution. It will then explore the phenomenon of public indifference to both governmental mismanagement and degradation of its water resources. The paper uses a thematic approach based on a case study that exemplifies the questions raised above and will illustrate the arguments I present in reply. Furthermore, three case studies of citizen suits will be studied in detail and assessed as alternative enforcement mechanisms and as paradigms for future action.. The conclusion I reach is that since the government has failed to protect its water resources, the Israeli public must organize and create its own enforcement mechanism using the existing legislative provisions known as citizen suits. Emphasis should be placed on litigation which will expose before the public the extent of the pollution and the ongoing failure of the government in dealing with it.

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