

Sea Turtle Dilemma

Objective

Students will debate the cause and effect of local government decisions.

Materials

- pens or pencils
- paper
- whiteboard and dry erase markers

Background

In the fictional town of Caretta Florida, the Jones family donated 3,000 acres of undeveloped land to the city. The land includes five miles of undeveloped beach front property. Many organizations are interested in the piece of property and what should be done with it. A hearing is scheduled at the city council to hear each organization's proposal before the council makes a decision.

Action

1. Divide the students into small groups.
2. Read the background information to the class and then hand each group a proposal.
3. Give the groups 3 to 4 minutes to come up with ideas that support why their proposal should be chosen by the local government. Allow each group about 10 minutes to present their case to the class.
4. The teacher will pick the proposal that is most persuasive.

Deeper Depths

Have the students create a poster to support their cause.

Have the students individually write a persuasive essay about their proposal.

Proposals:

1. Sea Turtles in Peril

This non-profit organization wants the beach to stay as it is – wild, untouched and undeveloped. The beach is an important nesting site for loggerhead sea turtles. The group knows that any development will disrupt the turtle’s nesting cycle and ecosystem along the beach and shoreline.

2. Developing Anyland

This corporation wants to build hotels along this stretch of beach. They know that this will draw visitors to the city and increase revenue for the city.

3. Fishing Frenzy

This commercial fishing fleet wants to be permitted to fish off the coast and build a processing plant on the property. They know that this will create jobs and be an economical boom for the city.

4. Drill Away

This oil company’s research indicates an oil reserve lies off the coast of the property. They want to build an oil rig about 50 miles off the coast and drill for oil. They know that an oil rig will create jobs and if oil is discovered will bring revenue to the city.

5. Save our Beach

This group is made up of local residents who want the land to be open to the public. They know that local residents would use the area to swim, picnic and for recreational boating and fishing.

