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TOXICS AND HAZARDOUS WASTE POLICY/POSITION PAPER

- 1) **POLLUTION PREVENTION** - Pollution Prevention should consistently be the most important approach for reducing environmental risks over the long term. It is far more costly to clean up hazardous waste sites, once created, than to prevent them in the first place. ~~which~~
- 2) **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE** - Low income and minority communities must no longer be forced to bear a disproportionate burden of hazardous waste that is generated, treated or disposed of in this country. [Senator Gore has introduced the Environmental Equity Act - See enclosed press release]
- 3) **MAKE THE POLLUTERS PAY** - Polluters, and not taxpayers, must pay for the environmental damage they create by misusing toxic chemicals and generating hazardous waste. If companies are required to bear the full costs of polluting the environment, not only is it far more equitable, but it also provides incentives for companies to reduce hazardous waste generation and toxic pollution.
- 4) **THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST BECOME A LEADER ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES** - The federal government, especially the Department of Defense and Department of Energy, has a dismal environmental record; the Military is the nation's worst polluter. Not only must the federal government clean up its own act, but it must also become a leader in developing cleaner technologies that reduce the use of toxic chemicals and the generation of hazardous waste.

BRIEFING PAPER ON TOXICS AND HAZARDOUS WASTE

I. TOPIC/PROBLEM: In 1987 the United States produced over 113 million tons of synthetic chemicals --- a 12,000 fold increase since 1940. More than 70,000 chemicals are now in commercial use with 500 to 1,000 new ones added every year. The U.S. Congress' Office of Technology Assessment estimates that U.S. industries release close to 400 billion pounds of toxics into the environment each year.

The effects of this tremendous increase in toxic chemical production and use, and hazardous waste generation are felt across the country:

- The EPA estimates that synthetic chemicals are present in the body tissue of 99 percent of all Americans.
- The Centers for Disease Control estimates that at least 7.7 million workers are exposed to one or more neurotoxins in the workplace on a regular basis.
- 20 percent of the drinking wells tested by the EPA serving as a primary water source were contaminated with one or more organic chemicals.
- According to the latest available data from the EPA, about 275 million metric tons of hazardous waste are generated annually by U.S. industries. This translates to over 1 ton of hazardous waste generated per person, per year.
- The U.S. now has over 32,000 hazardous waste sites to contend with (1226 are on the National Priority List of critical "Superfund" sites posing an immediate threat to public health).
- The EPA has established the Acute Hazards Events Data Base specifically to track accidents with the potential to have resulted in deaths, injuries, or evacuation. For the period from 1982 to 1986, the Data Base recorded an average of 2,070 accidents each year.

Low income and minority communities are most severely impacted by toxic chemical releases and hazardous waste generation and disposal:

- 60 percent of the African American population (15 million) and 60 percent of the Hispanic population (8 million) live in communities with one or more uncontrolled toxic waste sites. [Toxic Waste and Race in the U.S.]
- The minority portion of the population in communities with existing commercial hazardous waste incinerators is 89 percent higher than the national average. [Greenpeace]

II. HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM:

According to the latest available data from the EPA, about 275 million metric tons of hazardous waste are generated annually by U.S. industries. This translates to over 1 ton of hazardous waste generated per person, per year.

A. FEDERAL HAZARDOUS WASTE LEGISLATION:

1.) Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)--- The principal Federal law governing hazardous waste management is the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA). RCRA was amended and reauthorized for a 4-year period in the Hazardous Waste Amendments of 1984. Authorization expired at the end of FY'88 and Congress is currently in the process of reauthorizing RCRA.

RCRA was enacted to regulate the management of hazardous waste and improve waste disposal practices. RCRA was designed to manage active or ongoing hazardous waste operations (as opposed to Superfund, which generally deals with abandoned waste sites). These operations include disposal, incineration, treatment, storage in landfills, surface impoundments, waste piles, tanks and container storage areas.

In 1984, the Congress concerned with the slow progress EPA had made in issuing permits, amended RCRA to establish deadlines that owners/operators had to meet to apply for permits, or they were forced to close.

In 1995, 837 of the nation's 1,538 land disposal facilities for hazardous waste were required to close because they were unable or unwilling to meet new operating requirements. Despite the deadlines established under the 1984 amendments and even though these facilities were to have closed by 1987, as of October 1991 only 257 had done so. Unless the remaining 580 facilities are properly closed and cleaned up in a timely manner, they potentially threaten human health and the environment. [GAO/RCED-92-84, April 1992]

The current RCRA program focusses almost exclusively on unsafe disposal technologies, including hazardous waste incineration, deep well injection, or land disposal, rather than on reducing the generation of hazardous waste through pollution prevention.

2.) Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA) Commonly referred to as "Superfund" -- As the 1970's came to a close, a series of headline stories gave Americans a look at the dangers of dumping industrial and urban wastes on land. New York's Love Canal came first with reports of the evacuation of several hundred people. Hazardous Waste had been buried there for over 25 years contaminating streams and soil, and endangering the health of the community. Then the Valley of the Drums in Kentucky attracted attention as front page news with pictures of leaking storage barrels. The next hazardous waste headline was of Times Beach in eastern Missouri. Oil contaminated with toxic dioxin had polluted the land and water of this community.

The magnitude of the problems associated with these abandoned hazardous waste sites moved Congress to enact the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) in 1980. CERCLA, or Superfund, was the first Federal Law dealing with the dangers posed by the nation's abandoned and uncontrolled hazardous waste sites.

Abandoned hazardous waste sites and those that owner/operators cannot afford to cleanup under RCRA are usually referred to the national Superfund program. Should these sites not meet Superfund criteria, which are based on the facility's threat to human health, welfare and the environment, they may have to be cleaned up under a state program, if there is one.

The goal of Superfund is to protect citizens threatened by hazardous waste contamination from abandoned waste sites and requiring industry to change its behavior to use less toxic chemicals and create less toxic waste.

●●● The U.S. now has over 32,000 hazardous waste sites to contend with (1226 are on the National Priority List of critical "Superfund" sites posing an immediate threat to public health).

The Superfund program has been slow in cleaning up hazardous waste sites due in large part to lack of funding during the early years of the program and poor implementation during the latter years.

The Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) was passed by Congress in 1986 to update and improve the program. Reauthorization of the Superfund was incorporated into the 1991 Budget legislation which provides authority to continue funding under the existing program structure through September 30, 1994.

B. POLLUTION CONTROL vs. POLLUTION PREVENTION

The twenty years of federal environmental laws on the books today focus almost exclusively with controlling pollution once it has already been created. This focus is commonly referred to as "end-of-pipe" solutions or pollution control. In recent years, environmentalists and handfuls of states and industries have begun to focus on pollution prevention as the preferred approach for dealing with environmental problems.

Pollution prevention is defined as changes in raw materials, products or technologies of production which reduce the use of hazardous materials, energy, water or other resources and/or the creation of pollutants or destructive results without creating new risks of concern.

Pollution prevention protects the natural resources on the planet for future generations by not leaving excessive levels of wastes and residues and pollution and by not depleting our resources. Pollution prevention is the key to sustainable development.

There can be tremendous cost benefit for pollution prevention in terms of avoiding the rising costs of pollution control and hazardous waste cleanup. The EPA estimates that U.S. industries currently spend \$70-80 billion annually on pollution control technology. They estimate that the cost to local governments for pollution control is expected to increase from \$19 billion in 1987 to over \$32 billion by the year 2000, a 69 percent increase. Pollution prevention can actually save companies money.

Pollution prevention can help improve international relations. It can help developing countries avoid the environmental problems from which developed countries suffer by moving directly to less toxic, less polluting, and less wasteful technologies. The U.S. can become the leader in developing the safer, cleaner production technologies to export to these developing countries. In addition, pollution prevention will help the United States become a leader in environmental protection and avoid anti-U.S. sentiments that are felt when other countries must absorb our pollution, e.g. ozone depletion, toxic pollution.

III. CURRENT/RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:

RCRA Reauthorization - The Congress is currently in the process of reauthorizing the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Extremely weak bills opposed by all major environmental groups, have passed House Energy and Commerce Committee and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. The Senate is scheduled to begin debate on the issue of interstate waste transport on July 20, 1992 and the House will most likely consider a package of RCRA amendments later this summer. [EPA Administrator Reilly has testified that the RCRA program is working just fine and is not in need of change]

Shell Oil vs. EPA Decision - In December 1991, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia decided a case that has been pending since 1980; Shell Oil vs. the Environmental Protection Agency. In this decision, the Court struck down on procedural grounds two regulations that account for somewhere between 25 and 40 percent of the hazardous waste in the nation's hazardous waste program (RCRA). These regulations have been on the books since 1980. The EPA has until April of 1993 to repromulgate these regulations and the proposals released by the Agency to date are extremely weak. The Administration has used the Shell Oil decision as a way to significantly weaken the current RCRA hazardous waste program (see Administration Policies below).

IV. MAJOR EVENTS IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS/MONTHS:

RCRA Reauthorization See above description of status.

Comprehensive Environmental Response Cleanup and Liability Act (CERCLA, often referred to as Superfund) - Superfund reauthorization is likely to occur in the next Congress. For the past two years, industries have launched an all out attack on Superfund's liability system. The Superfund Act imposes strict joint and several liability on polluters. This system makes the polluters pay and creates strong incentives for industries to reduce hazardous waste generation.

V. KEY ISSUES AND ANALYSIS:

Pollution Prevention --- Pollution Prevention should consistently be the most important approach for reducing environmental risks over the long term.

Twenty years of environmental laws focussing on controlling pollution once it has already been created are not slowing down the nation's exposure to toxic chemicals and hazardous waste. In addition, controlling pollution is often far more costly than preventing pollution. The generation of hazardous wastes very often indicates that a company's production process is wasteful and inefficient.

With the rising costs of pollution control technology and hazardous waste disposal, companies can save money by reducing their toxic chemical use and hazardous waste generation. The EPA and state and local governments can also save money in the long run by adopting pollution prevention programs.

Pollution prevention is not a short term solution, but it is one we must adopt if we are to develop a sustainable society. The elements of a national toxic pollution prevention program should include the following:

Public Reporting - Companies should be required to publicly report on their toxic chemical production and use. The 1986 Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act has shown us that annual public reporting on toxic chemical releases has been an extremely powerful tool in promoting industrial changes that benefit the environment. This reporting must be expanded to cover additional information on toxic chemical use and production so that industries focus on the source of the problem, overuse of toxic chemicals.

Pollution Prevention Planning - Companies should be required to develop pollution prevention plans for reducing the use of toxic chemicals and hazardous waste generation. In 1986, the U.S. Congress' Office of Technology Assessment estimated that U.S. industries could cut their hazardous waste generation in half in five years if pollution prevention changes were implemented.

Technical Assistance - Because pollution prevention is a relatively new approach to environmental problems, technical assistance is an essential element of any program.

Chemical phase outs or bans - In the case of some of the most hazardous substances, phase outs or bans are the most effective solution. Lead, asbestos, PCBs and ozone depleting chemicals are some examples.

Several states have already passed pollution prevention laws that require reporting and planning. (Massachusetts, Oregon, New Jersey)

Environmental Justice --- Low income and minority communities have historically been forced to bear the greatest burden caused by toxic chemical overuse and hazardous waste generation. While no community should have to live with a hazardous waste site, low income and minority communities can no longer be viewed as easy targets for the polluters in this country.

The federal government currently undervalues these communities applying "risk assessments" upon which cleanup projections are based. These risk assessments fail to take into account all the risks these communities face on a regular basis, including multiple exposures to toxics or occupational exposure to toxics. A good example is a farm worker who is both exposed to pesticides at work and an incinerator or contaminated water supplies at home. Risk assessment models rarely take all these risks into account.

Senator Al Gore and Representative John Lewis have recently introduced the Environmental Justice Act. The Act calls for the following:

- A comprehensive survey of every county in the country in an attempt to rank the 100 counties most severely contaminated by releases of toxic chemicals and identify Environmental High Impact Areas;
- Technical assistance grants to community groups or individuals in these areas;
- Comprehensive health studies of these areas, and if health effects are identified, the bill provides for a moratorium on new sources of toxic hazards from locating in these areas; and
- Mandatory inspections of facilities operating in these areas.

Make Polluters Pay --- The Superfund statute provides that any polluter which has dangerously contaminated an abandoned waste site can be held strictly liable for the full cost of cleaning the site up. This spares the American taxpayers from having to pay for toxic waste messes that they did not cause and keeps the blame where it belongs with the polluters.

The statute also allows EPA to hold one party jointly and severally liable for the entire cost of cleaning up the site. This provision is designed to force responsible parties to perform the complicated and time-consuming job of finding all the responsible polluters and allocating each polluter's liability themselves. If the potentially responsible parties were not required to perform this difficult task, the government would have to do it at taxpayers' expense and many of the sites would not get cleaned up. In addition, this provision clearly shifts the burden to the parties in the best position to find out who all the polluters were, the polluters themselves.

The result of this tough strict, joint-and-several cleanup liability standard is that American industry fears Superfund liability. The very threat that they might be liable for a Superfund cleanup causes many businesses to entirely change the way they operate. It also gives them incentives to follow other environmental laws. In addition, this tough liability standard places the burden for cleanups where they belong: on the shoulders of the polluters, not the taxpayers.

Make the Federal Government a Leader on Environmental Issues — The U.S. Military is the nation's largest polluter. Virtually every major military installation in the U.S., as well as former bases and bases overseas, is responsible for extensive contamination. For example: The Department of Defense has identified 14,401 likely hot spots at 1,579 military facilities but has reported completion of only 287 sites. Nearly 100 DOD sites are on the EPA's "Superfund" National Priorities List, which means that they are among the most hazardous sites in America.

The EPA estimates that "national security" facilities (federal facilities) generate some 4.9 billion pounds of hazardous waste each year.

Despite these startling facts, the federal government is exempt from the Federal Right to Know Act which requires manufacturing companies to report on their toxic chemical releases. The EPA and States do not currently have the authority to enforce RCRA hazardous waste clean up requirements against federal facilities. In addition, very often defense contractors hide behind the Pentagon and expect the taxpayers to bail them out when it comes time to pay for environmental clean ups.

The federal government must become a leader on protecting the environment. The following policies should be adopted:

- The Pentagon, the Nation's largest polluter should clean up its own mess first.
- Stop the federal government's exemption from state and EPA oversight.
- Stop promoting the use of toxic technologies - Military and other federal government procurement specifications should be modified to reduce the use of toxic materials and inefficient, polluting technologies.
- Require federal facilities to publicly report on their toxic chemical emissions just like other manufacturing industries.
- The federal government should become a leader in developing safer, cleaner technologies.

VI. ADMINISTRATION POLICY:

Major Weakening of Hazardous Waste Regulation

Over the course of the last year, the Bush Administration has targeted reducing regulation of hazardous materials as one of their top priorities under their "de-regulatory" initiative. According to a February 1992 New York Times article [attached], the EPA "proposed changes in laws for cleaning up toxic waste sites that would reduce the Government's enforcement standards and eliminate some environmental safeguards." The following changes were proposed:

- Exempting some wastes from strict disposal requirements;
- Replacing enforcement actions against polluters with friendlier negotiations; and
- Allowing companies that conduct toxic waste clean ups for the Government to pile contaminated soil and other debris at the site without special permits.

VII. LIKELY QUESTIONS AND DRAFT ANSWERS:

QUESTION: Cleaning up the environment, and pollution prevention initiatives will threaten American jobs, competitiveness, product development and quality.

ANSWER: The Wall Street Journal reports that "Chemical companies find that it pays to reduce pollution at [the]source. By altering processes to yield less waste, they make production more efficient....Other costs associated with waste are rising. They include processing, disposal and cleanup, not to mention lawsuits and government fines when those jobs don't get done right." [June 11, 1991]

In other words, reducing the use of toxic chemicals in their production processes would make companies MORE, not less, competitive with companies in other countries because it would reduce waste, inefficiency, liability, and other costs associated with our over reliance on toxic chemicals and generation of hazardous waste.

Some examples:

Polaroid Corporation saved \$500,000 last year in just one process by substituting a less toxic solvent for a toxic solvent, toluene, in its dye-manufacturing process.

Emerson Electric, North Carolina, reduced worker exposure to organic paint solvents by switching from an organic-solvent-based system to a water-solvent-based system. This change resulted in \$600,000 savings per year in paint costs.

Riker Laboratories, California, a pharmaceutical company, switched from an organic solvent used to coat medicine tablets to a water based solvent. They reduced their air pollution and avoided the need for \$180,000 in pollution control equipment and now saves an additional \$15,000 annually in solvent costs.

[IMPORTANT: See additional examples of cost savings companies have experienced by implementing pollution prevention in separate report]

The EPA estimates that U.S. industries currently spend \$70-80 billion annually on pollution control technology. A review of the cost of producing and releasing a list of 300 commonly used toxic chemicals lead the Office of Technology Assessment to estimate that "a rough calculation of the costs of the raw materials, energy, and labor to ultimately produce this waste and the costs of using pollution control, waste management and regulatory systems to deal with this waste amny amount to some \$100 billion a year. This is---or should be---the national economic incentive for pollution prevention." [May 10, 1989] Note: there are some 70,000 chemicals in use in this country on a regular basis.

QUESTION: A national pollution prevention policy would require tens of thousands of hours of planning and reporting before one dime is actually spent on actual waste and risk reductions OR pollution prevention detracts from all the good things companies are doing in the area of pollution control.

ANSWER: Gathering and analyzing information about the use of toxic chemicals is the first and perhaps most crucial step towards reducing the threats posed by the use of toxic chemicals. Without this information, companies cannot determine how to diminish their use of toxics. This is not another short-term fix to our environmental problems. We are talking about a fundamental change in the focus of twenty years of environmental laws.

A recent review of over 100 companies who had implemented pollution prevention programs found that the average payback period was 12.2 months. [INFORM, New York] In addition, the following benefits were realized:

- Average reduction in waste = 68 percent.
- Average increase in production yield = 6.8 percent.
- Average dollars saved per activity per year = \$484,616.
- Average length of time to accomplish was 8.8 months.

QUESTION: What if companies cannot find substitutes for toxic materials and cannot implement pollution prevention?

ANSWER: The pollution prevention policy proposed does not force any company to make a change for which there are not already substitutes. All we are asking is that companies report on toxic chemical use and look for ways to reduce toxic pollution. If they can't find solutions, they won't be penalized. But this program will help them to find solutions and in the long run operate more efficient, less polluting production processes. It's a win/win proposal that does not intend to tell companies how to make their products or run their businesses.

TOXICS AND HAZARDOUS WASTE POLICY/POSITION PAPER

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Environmental Justice --- Low income and minority communities have historically been forced to bear the greatest burden caused by toxic chemical overuse and hazardous waste generation. While no community should have to live with a hazardous waste site, low income and minority communities can no longer be viewed as easy targets for the polluters in this country.

The federal government currently undervalues these communities applying "risk assessments" upon which cleanup projections are based. These risk assessments fail to take into account all the risks these communities face on a regular basis, including multiple exposures to toxics or occupational exposure to toxics. A good example is a farm worker who is both exposed to pesticides at work and an incinerator or contaminated water supplies at home. Risk assessment models rarely take all these risks into account.

Senator Al Gore and Representative John Lewis have recently introduced the Environmental Justice Act. The Act calls for the following:

- A comprehensive survey of every county in the country in an attempt to rank the 100 counties most severely contaminated by releases of toxic chemicals and identify Environmental High Impact Areas;
- Technical assistance grants to community groups or individuals in these areas;
- Comprehensive health studies of these areas, and if health effects are identified, the bill provides for a moratorium on new sources of toxic hazards from locating in these areas; and
- Mandatory inspections of facilities operating in these areas.

Make Polluters Pay --- The Superfund statute provides that any polluter which has dangerously contaminated an abandoned waste site can be held strictly liable for the full cost of cleaning the site up. This spares the American taxpayers from having to pay for toxic waste messes that they did not cause and keeps the blame where it belongs with the polluters.

The statute also allows EPA to hold one party jointly and severably liable for the entire cost of cleaning up the site. This provision is designed to force responsible parties to perform the complicated and time-consuming job of finding all the responsible polluters and allocating each polluter's liability themselves. If the potentially responsible parties were not required to perform this difficult task, the government would have to do it at taxpayers' expense and many of the sites would not get cleaned up. In addition, this provision clearly shifts the burden to the parties in the best position to find out who all the polluters were, the polluters themselves.

The result of this tough strict, joint-and-several cleanup liability standard is that American industry fears Superfund liability. The very threat that they might be liable for a Superfund cleanup causes many businesses to entirely change the way they operate. It also gives them incentives to follow other environmental laws. In addition, this tough liability standard places the burden for cleanups where they belong: on the shoulders of the polluters, not the taxpayers.

Make the Federal Government a Leader on Environmental Issues — The U.S. Military is the nation's largest polluter. Virtually every major military installation in the U.S., as well as former bases and bases overseas, is responsible for extensive contamination. For example: The Department of Defense has identified 14,401 likely hot spots at 1,579 military facilities but has reported completion of only 287 sites. Nearly 100 DOD sites are on the EPA's "Superfund" National Priorities List, which means that they are among the most hazardous sites in America.

The EPA estimates that "national security" facilities (federal facilities) generate some 4.9 billion pounds of hazardous waste each year.

Despite these startling facts, the federal government is exempt from the Federal Right to Know Act which requires manufacturing companies to report on their toxic chemical releases. The EPA and States do not currently have the authority to enforce RCRA hazardous waste clean up requirements against federal facilities. In addition, very often defense contractors hide behind the Pentagon and expect the taxpayers to bail them out when it comes time to pay for environmental clean ups.

The federal government must become a leader on protecting the environment. The following policies should be adopted:

- The Pentagon, the Nation's largest polluter should clean up its own mess first.
- Stop the federal government's exemption from state and EPA oversight.
- Stop promoting the use of toxic technologies - Military and other federal government procurement specifications should be modified to reduce the use of toxic materials and inefficient, polluting technologies.
- Require federal facilities to publicly report on their toxic chemical emissions just like other manufacturing industries.
- The federal government should become a leader in developing safer, cleaner technologies.

VI. ADMINISTRATION POLICY:

Major Weakening of Hazardous Waste Regulation

Over the course of the last year, the Bush Administration has targeted reducing regulation of hazardous materials as one of their top priorities under their "de-regulatory" initiative. According to a February 1992 New York Times article [attached], the EPA "proposed changes in laws for cleaning up toxic waste sites that would reduce the Government's enforcement standards and eliminate some environmental safeguards." The following changes were proposed:

- Exempting some wastes from strict disposal requirements;
- Replacing enforcement actions against polluters with friendlier negotiations; and
- Allowing companies that conduct toxic waste clean ups for the Government to pile contaminated soil and other debris at the site without special permits.

VII. LIKELY QUESTIONS AND DRAFT ANSWERS:

QUESTION: Cleaning up the environment, and pollution prevention initiatives will threaten American jobs, competitiveness, product development and quality.

ANSWER: The Wall Street Journal reports that "Chemical companies find that it pays to reduce pollution at [the]source. By altering processes to yield less waste, they make production more efficient....Other costs associated with waste are rising. They include processing, disposal and cleanup, not to mention lawsuits and government fines when those jobs don't get done right." [June 11, 1991]

In other words, reducing the use of toxic chemicals in their production processes would make companies MORE, not less, competitive with companies in other countries because it would reduce waste, inefficiency, liability, and other costs associated with our over reliance on toxic chemicals and generation of hazardous waste.

Some examples:

Polaroid Corporation saved \$500,000 last year in just one process by substituting a less toxic solvent for a toxic solvent, toluene, in its dye-manufacturing process.

Emerson Electric, North Carolina, reduced worker exposure to organic paint solvents by switching from an organic-solvent-based system to a water-solvent-based system. This change resulted in \$600,000 savings per year in paint costs.

Riker Laboratories, California, a pharmaceutical company, switched from an organic solvent used to coat medicine tablets to a water based solvent. They reduced their air pollution and avoided the need for \$180,000 in pollution control equipment and now saves an additional \$15,000 annually in solvent costs.

[IMPORTANT: See additional examples of cost savings companies have experienced by implementing pollution prevention in separate report]

The EPA estimates that U.S. industries currently spend \$70-80 billion annually on pollution control technology. A review of the cost of producing and releasing a list of 300 commonly used toxic chemicals lead the Office of Technology Assessment to estimate that "a rough calculation of the costs of the raw materials, energy, and labor to ultimately produce this waste and the costs of using pollution control, waste management and regulatory systems to deal with this waste amny amount to some \$100 billion a year. This is---or should be---the national economic incentive for pollution prevention." [May 10, 1989] Note: there are some 70,000 chemicals in use in this country on a regular basis.

QUESTION: A national pollution prevention policy would require tens of thousands of hours of planning and reporting before one dime is actually spent on actual waste and risk reductions OR pollution prevention detracts from all the good things companies are doing in the area of pollution control.

ANSWER: Gathering and analyzing information about the use of toxic chemicals is the first and perhaps most crucial step towards reducing the threats posed by the use of toxic chemicals. Without this information, companies cannot determine how to diminish their use of toxics. This is not another short-term fix to our environmental problems. We are talking about a fundamental change in the focus of twenty years of environmental laws.

A recent review of over 100 companies who had implemented pollution prevention programs found that the average payback period was 12.2 months. [INFORM, New York] In addition, the following benefits were realized:

- Average reduction in waste = 68 percent.
- Average increase in production yield = 6.8 percent.
- Average dollars saved per activity per year = \$484,616.
- Average length of time to accomplish was 8.8 months.

QUESTION: What if companies cannot find substitutes for toxic materials and cannot implement pollution prevention?

ANSWER: The pollution prevention policy proposed does not force any company to make a change for which there are not already substitutes. All we are asking is that companies report on toxic chemical use and look for ways to reduce toxic pollution. If they can't find solutions, they won't be penalized. But this program will help them to find solutions and in the long run operate more efficient, less polluting production processes. It's a win/win proposal that does not intend to tell companies how to make their products or run their businesses.