

# Another Problem for Oil

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CONGRESS should look with great skepticism at a report by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that says there are serious damages from oil and gas operations.

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At issue is whether drilling muds and produced wastes should be classified as hazardous. If such a change is made, it could have a serious impact on exploration and production activities.

The extent to which an alteration in classification would harm the industry is documented in a 700-page response to the EPA report, which was discussed at the midyear meeting of the Interstate Oil Compact Commission. Manuel A. Sirgo Jr. of Texaco told IOCC members the change would cost the industry \$44.3 billion the first year, assuming 1985 activity levels.

Sirgo says this expense would translate into a decrease in the number of U.S. oil wells from 635,624 to 223,756. In addition, he forecasts a drop in national production from 7.8 million to 6.9 million barrels a day.

A recent study by the American Petroleum Institute concludes that current state and federal regulatory programs are adequate to ensure proper waste management and groundwater protection.

At a time when economic and national security interests present a need for increased domestic exploration, the Congress ought to resist environmentalist pressures to further hamstring energy producers. BIOG: NAME:

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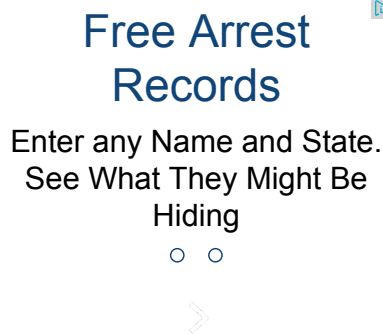
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