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## End of Testimony Will Not End Debate on Oil Field Waste

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Subcommittee members are Democrats Max Baucus of Montana, Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, George Mitchell of Maine, Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey, Bob Graham of Florida, Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut and Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio; and Republicans John Chafee of Rhode Island, Alan Simpson of Wyoming, Dave Duremberger of Minnesota, John Warner of Virginia, James Jeffords of Vermont and Steve Symms of Idaho.

"We are very excited about access to Anchor's drilling fluids technology and research and Unibar will immediately begin to offer the Anchor mud systems to our customers." Anchor has recently developed three new mud systems - Aquamul, Ancoquat and Enocare \_ that Unibar will make available. Anchor continues research into other systems aimed at increasing drilling efficiency and reducing environmental concerns.

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The last day of testimony is being taken today on Capitol Hill by a congressional subcommittee on the possibility of reclassifying oil field wastes as hazardous.

In producing states, the oil and gas industry would be brought to its knees if the wastes are reclassified, state regulators say. In Oklahoma, for example, state regulators say oil production would essentially shut down and half the gas production would halt if hazardous disposal regulations are extended to oil field wastes.

It will not be the end of the debate, by any means, though.

Indeed, Senate Environmental Protection Subcommittee members are taking the last round of testimony today on the narrow scope of oil field wastes, but the full Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works will hear more about the matter later in the congressional session. The **Resource Conservation and Recovery Act** is up for reauthorization.

We heard of stark concerns in Oklahoma and Texas relayed last week to subcommittee members, but granted there also were startling comments made by environmentalists. The National Audubon Society is one of the more active groups on this issue.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency itself has recommended oil field wastes continue to be exempt from hazardous disposal requirements, citing estimated additional costs of \$1 billion to \$6 billion annually for the industry and consumers. That cost estimate was based on 1986 real dollars.

EPA emphatically distinguishes its recommendation from the desires expressed by private environmentalist groups, said Roger Meachum, a spokesman in EPA Region 6 in Dallas.

"Part of the logic behind it (continuance of the exemption) is that oil field wastes are covered under other regulations," Meachum said, confirming the agency's former position.

Yet, if one is prone to draw conclusions from the regional representation on the subcommittee, or the full committee itself, and who they invited to testify, the oil and gas industry will be disheartened.

For example, when subcommittee members sought input from Oklahoma - the third gas producing state and fifth oil producing state in the nation - it asked not for the oil and gas director, but the head of an internal task force investigating oil field pollution.

Specifically, the group asked to hear from Lowell Brown, who heads the state-mandated Pollution Response Team at the commission.

Due to budgetary constraints, though, the agency sent no one to Washington. Instead, the agency forwarded comments drafted by Oil and Gas Conservation Division Director C.D. "Jack" Davidson and sponsored by General Administrator Thadd Johnson.

There is no question from prior public statements that Brown and Davidson have opposite positions about the state of regulation of the oil and gas industry.

While Davidson acknowledges there are age-old problems in the oilpatch due to practices in the early days of oil and gas production - dating back to the turn of the century - he emphasizes that Oklahoma has been in the forefront of regulation and continually strives to better that position.

For example, it was pointed out to subcommittee members that Oklahoma has been regulating oil and gas pollution since at least 1939 and next year some 17 new rules will be considered.

Brown, on the other hand, has attacked pollution enforcement from the inside out. He has told Oklahoma legislators studying the possibility of an omnibus environmental agency and an independent task force studying reform of the corporation commission that there is lax enforcement of rules and a general pro-

business attitude toward the oil and gas industry.

Now, consider that there is a strong push at EPA to delegate more and more programs to state administration, and look at the make-up of the Senate subcommittee debating at oil field wastes. Few are from oil and gas producing states.

Subcommittee members are Democrats Max Baucus of Montana, Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, George Mitchell of Maine, Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey, Bob Graham of Florida, Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut and Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio; and Republicans John Chafee of Rhode Island, Alan Simpson of Wyoming, Dave Duremburger of Minnesota, John Warner of Virginia, James Jeffords of Vermont and Steve Symms of Idaho.

The full committee also includes Democrats Harry Reid of Nevada and Harris Wofford of Pennsylvania; and Republican Robert Smith of New Hampshire.

Wyoming is the only state represented that has significant oil and gas production although Pennsylvania and Ohio are older producing states.

Montana, Nevada, Virginia and New York are, however, members of the **Interstate Oil** and Gas Compact Commission, which has as its member 29 oil and gas producing states.

Correlative lawmakers who will debate the issue in the House chamber were not available. . .

Two of the biggest drilling fluids companies in the world have merged in a buyout of Unibar Energy Services Inc., which has an office in Oklahoma City, by Anchor Drilling Fluids A/S of Norway.

Unibar, based in Houston with its Mid-continent regional headquarters in Oklahoma City, is the largest independent drilling fluids company in the United States. It has more than 200 employees with annual revenues of about \$50 million, said outgoing Chairman Fred Ziedman.

Anchor Drilling, based in Stavanger, Norway, is the fourth largest drilling fluids company in the world with operations in 20 countries and more than 500 employees, said President Steiner Olsen.

When the two companies are consolidated, revenues will be increased to about \$150 million, Olsen said.

It "is a terrific combination that will have significant benefits for our customers, employees and suppliers," said Unibar President Perry Bennett.

"We are very excited about access to Anchor's drilling fluids technology and research and Unibar will immediately begin to offer the Anchor mud systems to our customers." Anchor has recently developed three new mud systems - Aquamul, Ancoquat and Enocare \_ that Unibar will make available. Anchor continues research into other systems aimed at increasing drilling efficiency and reducing environmental concerns.

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