

[All databases](#) | [Change databases](#)

ProQuest Research Library

[Basic Search](#) [Advanced Search](#) [Publications](#)[< Back to results](#)[More like this >](#)

OIL FIELD WASTES MAY BE RECLASSIFIED

Fears, Ronda. **Journal Record** [Oklahoma City, Okla] 19 Mar 1991.

[Full text](#)[Abstract/Details](#)

Abstract [Translate](#)

[Hide highlighting](#)

Classification of oil field wastes, many of which are exempt currently from hazardous waste regulations, will be debated by Congress as it looks at reauthorization of the **Resource Conservation and Recovery Act**.

Some of the debate on the act has begun, but it is a vast piece of legislation. It covers not only oil field wastes but municipal landfill wastes, medical wastes and much more.

Some petroleum wastes are classified as hazardous, mostly those associated with refineries, and are subject to much more stringent disposal and handling requirements. Plus, some oil field wastes and practices are regulated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, or Superfund, along with the Clean Water Act, Toxic Substance Control Act and others.

Full Text [Translate](#) [Turn on search term navigation](#)

The writing is on the wall.

Classification of oil field wastes, many of which are exempt currently from hazardous waste regulations, will be debated by Congress as it looks at reauthorization of the **Resource Conservation and Recovery Act**.

Some of the debate on the act has begun, but it is a vast piece of legislation. It covers not only oil field wastes but municipal landfill wastes, medical wastes and much more.

Speculations of when the full debate will begin range from April to 1992 or 1993.

For once, the oil and gas industry has regulators - federal and state - on its side. The industry's nemesis here, as in many cases, lies in the environmental ranks.

When asked if reauthorization of the act would likely include a debate on classifying oil field wastes as hazardous, Jerry Simmons, director of production services for the **Interstate Oil Compact Commission**, said, "Oh yeah, you bet."

"We know that the environmental lobby has already been working the Hill (Washington, D.C.) staff heavily," Simmons said.

Oil Compact Commission members, which includes some 30 states with oil and gas production, support continuation of state regulation of oil field waste as a solid waste rather than federal regulation of those wastes as hazardous waste.

Some petroleum wastes are classified as hazardous, mostly those associated with refineries, and are subject to much more stringent disposal and handling requirements. Plus, some oil field wastes and practices are regulated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, or Superfund, along with the Clean Water Act, Toxic Substance Control Act and others.

When it comes to the exempt oil field wastes, even the federal Environmental Protection Agency supports continuation of the exemption. The states do, too, as exemplified through the **Interstate Oil Compact Commission**.

"It has always been the philosophy of EPA to encourage states to develop their own environmental programs and to administer federal programs," said Roger Meachum with EPA's Region 6 in Dallas, "because they can be more effective and efficient."

"These wastes are large volume, low toxicity wastes," Meachum said.

"States already regulate these wastes adequately."

Environmentalists, though, are pushing for more stringent federal regulations for most oil field wastes, but not all. And they insist on federal regulations, although state administration is expected.

"We're certainly lobbying for a federal program to govern oil and gas waste," said Melinda Taylor, general council for the National Audubon Society in Washington.

"The way the states handle it vary so greatly from state to state."

States belonging to the ranks of **Interstate Oil Compact Commission** have agreed to internal and external reviews of their regulatory schemes, including scrutiny from environmental groups such as the Audubon Society.

"I think we've done a good job with some of the environmental groups over the past few years," said Simmons.

The review exercise, he said, will also give environmentalists an opportunity to see firsthand problems with regulations such as understaffing and budget constraints that ineffectuate regulations that look good on paper.

There is also concerns about the cost to the oil and gas industry if oil field wastes are classified as hazardous. Many in the industry hope that this will deter Congress from taking such a dramatic measure.

"I don't think there's anything gelled" as far as an attitude within Congress, said Don Schnacke, a member of the Independent Petroleum Association of America's liaison committee, which met in Washington about two weeks ago.

"I don't think they want to regulate us out of business."

EPA has estimated that reclassification of oil field wastes as hazardous would cost the industry and consumers from \$1 billion to \$6.7 billion annually. That estimate only considers compliance. It does not include costs associated with the land disposal ban and corrective actions.

"That would just about break the bank," Schnacke said.

Environmentalists take issue with EPA's estimate.

"We're working on a comprehensive economic impact study that should be complete in a couple of weeks," Taylor said.

"We're very concerned about the economic impact."

First, she stressed that the Audubon Society does not intend that all oil field wastes should be classified as hazardous but nevertheless does feel more adequate prevention regulations should be established along with handling and disposal practices.

In California, she noted, most oil field wastes are not exempt from the hazardous rule. States must adopt regulation as stringent as federal regulations but can surpass those measures.

"The industry is surviving there (California)," Taylor said.

Simmons said he expects subcommittee hearings this spring on reauthorization of **Resource Conservation and Recovery** Act. Taylor agreed but added that the measure will probably not reach the floor for maybe two years due its complexity and broad expanse.

EPA does not anticipate the act to be reauthorized until 1992 or 1993, Meachum said.

The Environment and Public Works Committee will handle the matter. There are no members on the committee from Oklahoma.

Word count: **812**

Copyright Dolan Media Mar 19, 1991

More like this



Search this database... 

Related items

Search with indexing terms

Company/organization

- Environmental Protection Agency
- National Audubon Society

Search

[Contact Us](#) [Terms and Conditions](#) [Accessibility](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Cookie Policy](#)

Copyright © 2016 ProQuest LLC.