

*Managing Industrial Solid Wastes From
Manufacturing, Mining, Oil and Gas
Production, and Utility Coal Combustion*

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BACKGROUND PAPER

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mining, oil and
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and utility
coal combustion

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
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Foreword

The 1976 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) is the major statute governing what are called solid wastes. Federal efforts to date under RCRA have focused on controlling the management and disposal of certain 'hazardous' wastes. The remaining solid wastestream, the subject of this background paper, dwarfs that defined as hazardous. Although not classified as hazardous, some of this remaining wastestream does contain toxic and other undesirable constituents.

This background paper was requested by the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Transportation and Hazardous Materials in anticipation of the reauthorization of RCRA. The paper examines wastes generated by industrial activities that play a dominant role in our national economy-oil and gas production, mining and mineral processing, coal combustion, and manufacturing. In previous reports on municipal solid waste and medical waste, OTA examined other solid wastes not classified as hazardous.

Improving the regulation and management of solid wastes that are not classified as hazardous, and preventing their generation where possible, poses many challenges for Congress, EPA and other Federal agencies, the States, and the involved industries. Major issues include how to best achieve environmental protection without impeding economic development, how EPA and other Federal agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management should interact in managing wastes generated on Federal lands, what the relative roles of EPA and the States should be, whether sufficient resources will be available to develop and implement effective programs, and whether the current regulatory structure under RCRA is an effective one.

OTA is grateful for the assistance provided by workshop participants, contractors, reviewers, and other contributors during the preparation of this paper. These individuals helped OTA obtain and examine a wide range of information and issues. OTA, of course, remains solely responsible for the contents of the paper.


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Workshop on “Non-Hazardous” Solid Wastes, March 8, 1990

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