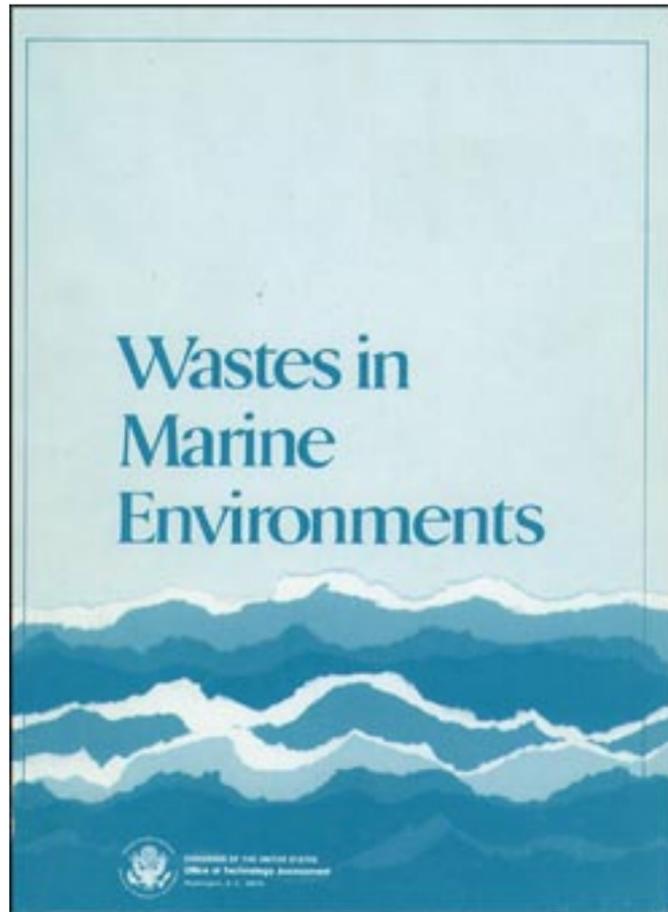


Wastes in Marine Environments

April 1987

NTIS order #PB87-194585



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Foreword

‘Where can we dispose of our wastes?’ is a question being faced by virtually every community and industry in the country. For years, one common answer for communities and industries located in coastal areas has been to intentionally dispose of large amounts of waste materials in the Nations marine environments—estuaries, coastal waters, and the open ocean.

Two congressional committees—the House Committees on Merchant Marine and Fisheries and on Public Works and Transportation—requested OTA to undertake a broad assessment of waste disposal in marine environments. In addition, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation endorsed the assessment. As part of the assessment, OTA issued a report on *Ocean Incineration: Its Role in Managing Hazardous Waste* (August 1986), and a staff paper on *Subseabed Disposal of High-Level Radioactive Waste* (May 1986).

This final report addresses two fundamental questions: what is the general condition of different marine environments and their resources, and what role can and should marine environments play in overall waste management? OTA's principal findings are that estuaries and coastal waters are in deep trouble around the Nation, and that more coordinated waste management efforts are needed in many areas. As a Nation, we have been only partially successful in protecting these waters—and their ecologically, commercially, and esthetically valuable resources—from degradation. Policies to maintain or improve their quality, however, must be implemented in conjunction with policies about waste management strategies in general, including disposal in the open ocean and on land.

OTA is particularly grateful for the considerable effort devoted to this undertaking by our advisory panel, numerous contacts in Federal and State agencies, and numerous individuals in industry, academia, and public interest and environmental groups. These individuals helped OTA examine the enormous amount of available information from a number of important perspectives. We greatly appreciate this help.

JOHN H. GIBBONS
Director

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NOTE: OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The panel does not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes full responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.

Related OTA Reports

- *Ocean Incineration: Its Role in Managing Hazardous Wastes.* OTA-O-3 13; August 1986. GPO stock #052-003-01046-1; \$11.00.
- *Serious Reduction of Hazardous Waste for Pollution Prevention and Industrial Efficiency.* OTA-ITE-3 17; September 1986. GPO stock #052 -003-0 1048-8; \$12.00.
- *Transportation of Hazardous Materials.* OTA-SET-304; July 1986. GPO stock #052-003-01042-9; \$13.00.
- *Super fund Strategy.* OTA-ITE-252; April 1985. GPO stock #052 -003-00994 -3; \$10.00.
- *Protecting the Nation Groundwater From Con lamination.* OTA-O-233; October 1984. GPO stock #052-003-00966-8; \$7.50.
- *Acid Rain and Transported Air Pollutants: Implications for Public Policy.* OTA-O- 204; June 1984. GPO stock #052 -003-00956-1 ; \$9.50
- *Technologies and Management Strategies for Hazardous Waste Control.* OTA-M - 196; March 1983. NTIS order #PB 83-189241.

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