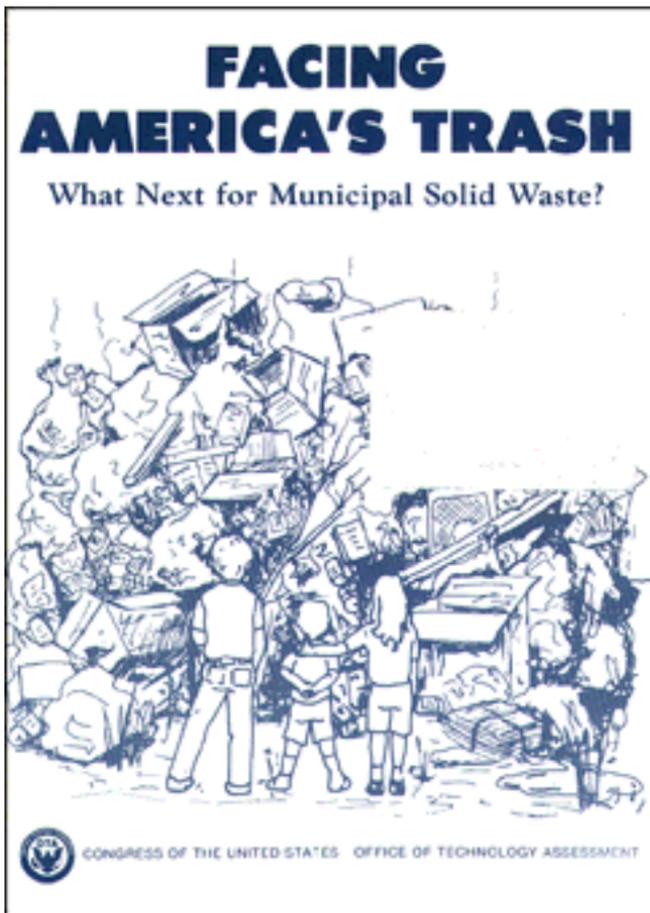


*Facing America's Trash: What Next for
Municipal Solid Waste?*

October 1989

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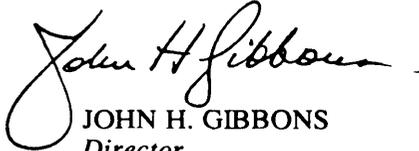
Foreword

Increasing amounts of municipal solid waste, declining landfill capacity, public opposition to all types of management facilities, concerns about the risks associated with waste management, and rising costs are common problems facing communities across the Nation. As a result, there is increasing awareness about the need to prevent municipal waste from being generated in the first place and to better manage what is generated. Many communities, States, businesses, and public interest groups are undertaking a variety of activities to address these needs. The challenge to improve the situation ranges from actions by individuals to supportive policies at the Federal level.

This study on MSW was requested by the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works in anticipation of the reauthorization of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. As part of the assessment, OTA issued a background paper on *Issues in Medical Waste Management* (October 1988).

Our report discusses options for a national policy based on the dual strategies of MSW prevention and better management. It also presents options to address immediate problems such as increased interstate shipments of MSW and unfinished Federal guidelines for landfills and incinerators.

OTA is grateful for the considerable assistance provided by our advisory panel, workshop participants, contractors, reviewers, and other contributors during the course of the assessment. These individuals helped OTA obtain and examine the enormous amount of available information. OTA, however remains solely responsible for the contents of this report.


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NOTE: OTA appreciates the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The views expressed in this OTA report, however, are the sole responsibility of the Office of Technology Assessment. Participation on the advisory panel does not imply endorsement of the report.

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Workshop on Markets for Recycled Materials, June 8, 1988

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Workshop on Incineration/Waste-to-Energy Issues, June 28, 1988

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Workshop on MSW Reduction, July 14-15, 1988

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