

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

March 12, 1996

SUPERFUND NEEDS REASON, NOT R.O.S.A.

Dear Colleague:

We noted with interest a Dear Colleague dated February 29th seeking your cosponsorship of H.R. 2500, the Reform of Superfund Act (R.O.S.A.). It amused us because it cited editorials from leading newspapers about the need for Superfund reform. We do indeed agree with the need for Superfund reform, which was why there was bipartisan legislation in the House in the Fall of 1994 to achieve that result with a consensus to benefit the health and safety of the American people.

It was especially interesting for us to note that those editorials in the February 29th Dear Colleague pre-dated the 1994 consensus agreement. In fact, the editorials were as old as September 2, 1993 and not more recent than April 21, 1994. We thought you would find it useful to see some recent editorial thought not about the need to reform the Superfund, but specifically about G.O.P. proposals in this Congress.

The Seattle Times

"Limiting the cleanup law, as some GOP leaders propose, is not the remedy most Americans have in mind..."

"Last year, Congress drafted a workable set of reforms, but the law was stalled by Bob Dole's Republicans, who didn't want to give the Democrats anything to crow about in the election..."

"Now, Republican leaders propose to abandon retroactive liability and to eliminate the tax on chemicals that has paid the public's share..."

"Americans support cleanup of toxic dumps and are willing to pay for it..."

- June 1, 1995

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

"The real threat to Superfund lies in the moves by conservatives to cut the Superfund tax, deny EPA the authority or money to enforce the law and - perhaps most serious of all - shift the cleanup responsibility and costs to the states, which can neither afford nor want the burden..."

"There is no reason to destroy a law that makes most polluters pay for the mess they have made. If the anti-Superfund activists have their way, through, the general public will pay - as the dumps will again proliferate..."

- August 24, 1995

Star Tribune

MINNEAPOLIS - ST. PAUL

"The solution to this political impasse should be to resurrect last year's bill in both the Senate and House, and pass it."

"Unfortunately, the dynamics have changed. Leaders in the insurance industry now see a chance to escape responsibility, and they are going for it..."

"That shouldn't be allowed to happen."

- September 15, 1995

Detroit Free Press

"SUPERFUND: Man to fix the program could cripple it..."

"The latest attempt to fix Superfund is laced with favors for polluters. The most disturbing - and expensive - idea is the 'retroactive liability discount,' which would give big tax breaks to many companies that have helped pay for the cleanups..."

"It allows past decisions about cleanups to be revisited, a provision that can only impede what little progress Superfund is making. It doesn't maintain enough groundwater protection. It puts so much emphasis on cost efficiencies that many sites may just be fenced in."

"Given all these faults, the Superfund bill needs to go to the dumps..."

- November 12, 1995

Sincerely yours,

Ju signed [Signature]

JAMES L. OBERSTAR
Ranking Democratic Member
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

[Signature]

ROBERT A. BORSKI
Ranking Democratic Member
Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee