

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

November 8, 1995

WHAT THE WITNESSES SAID ABOUT H.R. 2500

Dear Colleague:

The following is what the witnesses on November 2 said about H.R. 2500, the Republican plan to "reform" Superfund.

Carol M. Browner, EPA Administrator: "H.R. 2500 will drive remedies to the lower end of the protectiveness goals and emphasize exposure control (e.g. fences) rather than long-term solutions."

"The emphasis on minimal low-cost remedies will inhibit economic redevelopment of these sites."

"The bill's movement away from restoring ground water is a mistake given the importance of clean ground water. In the United States, drinking water for 95 percent of rural and 35 percent of urban households is supplied by ground water."

"H.R. 2500 will increase the time required for cleanup decisions dramatically. Transaction costs will also increase commensurate with delays."

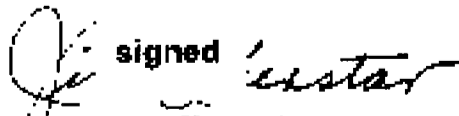
"The cornerstone of the liability reform is a windfall for polluters . . . There is no defensible public policy for using public funds in such a manner. At a time when Congress is struggling to reduce overall Federal spending, why should the United States give large corporations that were aware of their liability yet pursued sometimes irresponsible waste disposal practices a 50 percent rebate on cleanup costs? It does not make good public policy sense."

"H.R. 2500 overreaches by benefitting even the very largest, most culpable companies at the expense of the Fund, resulting in no money for cleanups. . . The bill's allocation process is obviously flawed. It does not protect Federal funds and it may not result in as many settlements as anticipated. Transaction costs will continue to remain high as litigation -- including contribution actions -- remains the most common approach to settle liability."


Lois J. Schiffer, Assistant Attorney General: "This bill as currently conceived and drafted will prevent the Superfund program from accomplishing its basic goal of cleaning up Superfund sites. . . This bill simply does not provide for 'responsible reform' of Superfund. It is so fundamentally flawed that it does not even provide a good starting point for responsible reform."

Douglas E. Hall, Assistant Secretary of Commerce: "This bill will not protect the precious natural resources that are so very vital to America's economy and our way of life. With its emphasis on cutting costs for the very polluters that have harmed the public's natural resources, this bill effectively reverses the current commitment of the Superfund Act and the Oil Pollution Act to restoring resources that are harmed by hazardous substances or oil."

Sincerely,

 signed

James L. Oberstar
Ranking Democratic Member
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure

 signed

Robert A. Borski
Ranking Democratic Member
Subcommittee on Water
and Environment