

WASTE POLICY

The fundamental priority of waste is to reduce it, reuse it, recycle it as much as possible and then dispose of it as responsibly as possible. In the past 35 years, Federal regulations such as the 1976 RCRA demonstrate how the private sector can increase production efficiency, provide the global market quality products profitably and do so in an environmentally responsible manner. Without damaging the business sector, Federal regulations combined with creative market forces have reduced hazardous waste volume in America by nearly 80%, without significant government expenditures.

International trading in waste should also be encouraged using private sector forces to develop a similar structure that will include universal tracking standards for worker safety and environmental protection. Creation of a regulatory universal market will protect our planet, and help to guarantee the goal of minimum waste. Hazardous waste facilities should be viewed as location of last resort, wherever in the world they are located. Contents of those facilities should be identified and tracked for their entire life cycle, including storage into the waste facilities with extensive air, land and water monitoring.

I support the concept of monitoring toxic materials throughout the world from cradle to grave - from the natural world, through manufacturing to waste storage sites, with necessary safeguards by the public sector being funded by the cost of each product. Thus, materials that contain harmful and potentially polluting waste products will pay for their own disposal and monitoring, and manufacturers will have incentive to reduce costs by finding alternative materials. One partial example of this built in cost procedure in Illinois is the current customer fees placed on automobile tires and batteries in requisite recycling programs collected by local retail outlets. I believe a fee driven, customer based program is a better choice than legislation alone.