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SUBCHAPTER I—GENERAL PROVISIONS

§ 6901. Congressional findings

(a) Solid waste

The Congress finds with respect to solid waste—

(1) that the continuing technological progress and improvement in methods of manufacture, packaging, and marketing of consumer products has resulted in an ever-mounting increase, and in a change in the characteristics, of the mass material discarded by the purchaser of such products;

(2) that the economic and population growth of our Nation, and the improvements in the standard of living enjoyed by our population, have required increased industrial production to meet our needs, and have made necessary the demolition of old buildings, the construction of new buildings, and the provision of highways and other avenues of transportation, which, together with related industrial, commercial, and agricultural operations, have resulted in a rising tide of scrap, discarded, and waste materials;

(3) that the continuing concentration of our population in expanding metropolitan and other urban areas has presented these communities with serious financial, management, intergovernmental, and technical problems in the disposal of solid wastes resulting from the industrial, commercial, domestic, and other activities carried on in such areas;

(4) that while the collection and disposal of solid wastes should continue to be primarily the function of State, regional, and local agencies, the problems of waste disposal as set forth above have become a matter national in scope and in concern and necessitate Federal action through financial and technical assistance and leadership in the development, demonstration, and application of new and improved methods and processes to reduce the amount of waste and unsalvageable materials and to provide for proper and economical solid waste disposal practices.

(b) Environment and health

The Congress finds with respect to the environment and health, that—

(1) although land is too valuable a national resource to be needlessly polluted by discarded materials, most solid waste is disposed of on land in open dumps and sanitary landfills;

(2) disposal of solid waste and hazardous waste in or on the land without careful planning and management can present a danger to human health and the environment;

(3) as a result of the Clean Air Act [42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.], the Water Pollution Control Act [33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.], and other Federal and State laws respecting public health and the environment, greater amounts of solid waste (in the form of sludge and other pollution treatment residues) have been created. Similarly, inadequate and environmentally unsound practices for the disposal or use of solid waste have created greater amounts of air and water pollution and other problems for the environment and for health;

(4) open dumping is particularly harmful to health, contaminates drinking water from underground and surface supplies, and pollutes the air and the land;

(5) the placement of inadequate controls on hazardous waste management will result in substantial risks to human health and the environment;

(6) if hazardous waste management is improperly performed in the first instance, corrective action is likely to be expensive, complex, and time consuming;

(7) certain classes of land disposal facilities are not capable of assuring long-term containment of certain hazardous wastes, and to avoid substantial risk to human health and the environment, reliance on land disposal should be minimized or eliminated, and land disposal, particularly landfill and surface impoundment, should be the least favored method for managing hazardous wastes; and

(8) alternatives to existing methods of land disposal must be developed since many of the cities in the United States will be running out of suitable solid waste disposal sites within five years unless immediate action is taken.

(c) Materials

The Congress finds with respect to materials, that—

(1) millions of tons of recoverable material which could be used are needlessly buried each year;

(2) methods are available to separate usable materials from solid waste; and

(3) the recovery and conservation of such materials can reduce the dependence of the United States on foreign resources and reduce the deficit in its balance of payments.

(d) Energy

The Congress finds with respect to energy, that—

(1) solid waste represents a potential source of solid fuel, oil, or gas that can be converted into energy;

(2) the need exists to develop alternative energy sources for public and private consumption in order to reduce our dependence on such sources as petroleum products, natural gas, nuclear and hydroelectric generation; and

(3) technology exists to produce usable energy from solid waste.

(Pub. L. 89-272, title II, §1002, as added Pub. L. 94-580, §2, Oct. 21, 1976, 90 Stat. 2796; amended Pub. L. 95-609, §7(a), Nov. 8, 1978, 92 Stat. 3081; Pub. L. 98-616, title I, §101(a), Nov. 8, 1984, 98 Stat. 3224.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Clean Air Act, referred to in subsec. (b)(3), is act July 14, 1955, ch. 360, 69 Stat. 322, as amended, which is classified generally to chapter 85 (§7401 et seq.) of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 7401 of this title and Tables.

The Water Pollution Control Act, referred to in subsec. (b)(3), probably means act June 30, 1948, ch. 758, 62 Stat. 1155, known as the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended generally by Pub. L. 92-500, §2, Oct. 18, 1972, 86 Stat. 816, which is classified generally to chapter 26 (§1251 et seq.) of Title 33, Navigation and Navigable Waters. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1251 of Title 33 and Tables.

CODIFICATION

The statutory system governing the disposal of solid wastes set out in this chapter is found in Pub. L. 89-272, title II, as amended in its entirety and completely revised by section 2 of Pub. L. 94-580, Oct. 21, 1976, 90 Stat. 2795. See Short Title of 1976 Amendment note below.

The act, as set out in this chapter, carries a statutory credit showing the sections as having been added by Pub. L. 94-580, without reference to amendments to the act between its original enactment in 1965 and its complete revision in 1976. The act, as originally enacted in 1965, was classified to section 3251 et seq. of this title. For a recapitulation of the provisions of the act as originally enacted, see notes in chapter 39 (§3251 et seq.) of this title where the act was originally set out.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 3251 of this title prior to the general amendment of the Solid Waste Disposal Act by Pub. L. 94-580.

AMENDMENTS

1984—Subsec. (b)(5) to (8). Pub. L. 98-616 added pars. (5) to (7), struck out former par. (5) providing that “hazardous waste presents, in addition to the problems associated with non-hazardous solid waste, special dangers to health and requires a greater degree of regulation than does non-hazardous solid waste; and”, redesignated former par. (6) as (8), and substituted a period for the semicolon at end.

1978—Subsec. (a)(4). Pub. L. 95-609 substituted “solid waste” for “solid-waste”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

SHORT TITLE OF 2012 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 112-195, §1, Oct. 5, 2012, 126 Stat. 1452, provided that: “This Act [enacting section 6939g of this title] may be cited as the ‘Hazardous Waste Electronic Manifest Establishment Act’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 2005 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 109-58, title XV, §1521, Aug. 8, 2005, 119 Stat. 1092, provided that: “This subtitle [subtitle B (§§1521-1533) of title XV of Pub. L. 109-58, enacting sections 6991j to 6991m of this title, amending sections 6991 to 6991f, 6991h, and 6991i of this title, and enacting provisions set out as notes under section 6991b of this title] may be cited as the ‘Underground Storage Tank Compliance Act’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1996 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 104-119, §1, Mar. 26, 1996, 110 Stat. 830, provided that: “This Act [amending sections 6921, 6924, 6925, 6947, and 6949a of this title and enacting provisions set out as a note under section 6949a of this title] may be cited as the ‘Land Disposal Program Flexibility Act of 1996’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1992 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 102-386, title I, §101, Oct. 6, 1992, 106 Stat. 1505, provided that: “This title [enacting sections 6908, 6939c to 6939e, and 6965 of this title, amending sections 6903, 6924, 6927, and 6961 of this title, and enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 6939c and 6961 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Federal Facility Compliance Act of 1992’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1988 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 100-582, §1, Nov. 1, 1988, 102 Stat. 2950, provided that: “This Act [enacting sections 6992 to 6992k of this title and section 3063 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, and amending section 6903 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Medical Waste Tracking Act of 1988’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1984 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 98-616, §1, Nov. 8, 1984, 98 Stat. 3221, provided that: “This Act [enacting sections 6917, 6936 to 6939a, 6949a, 6979a, 6979b, and 6991 to 6991i of this title, amending this section and sections 6902, 6905, 6912, 6915, 6916, 6921 to 6933, 6935, 6941 to 6945, 6948, 6956, 6962, 6972, 6973, 6976, 6982 and 6984 of this title and enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 6905, 6921 and 6926 of this title] may be cited as ‘The Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1980 AMENDMENTS

Pub. L. 96-482, §1, Oct. 21, 1980, 94 Stat. 2334, provided: “This Act [enacting sections 6933, 6934, 6941a, 6955, and 6956 of this title, amending sections 6903, 6905, 6911, 6912, 6916, 6921, 6922, 6924, 6925, 6927 to 6931, 6941 to 6943, 6945, 6946, 6948, 6949, 6952, 6953, 6962, 6963, 6964, 6971, 6973, 6974, 6976, 6979, and 6982 of this title; and enacting and repealing provisions set out as a note under section 6981 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Solid Waste Disposal Act Amendments of 1980’.”

Pub. L. 96-463, §1, Oct. 15, 1980, 94 Stat. 2055, provided: “This Act [enacting sections 6901a, 6914a and 6932 of this title, amending sections 6903, 6943 and 6948 of this title, and enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 6363 and 6932 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Used Oil Recycling Act of 1980’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1976 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 94-580, §1, Oct. 21, 1976, 90 Stat. 2795, provided that: “This Act [enacting this chapter and provisions set out as notes under this section and section 6981 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976’.”

SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 89-272, title II, §1001, as added by Pub. L. 94-580, §2, Oct. 21, 1976, 90 Stat. 2795, provided that:

“This title (hereinafter in this title referred to as ‘this Act’), together with the following table of contents, may be cited as the ‘Solid Waste Disposal Act’” [table of contents omitted].

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MATERIALS POLICY

Pub. L. 91-512, title II, §§201-206, Oct. 26, 1970, 84 Stat. 1234, known as the “National Materials Policy Act of 1970”, provided for the establishment of the National Commission on Materials Policy to make a full investigation and study for the purpose of developing a national materials policy to utilize present resources and technology more efficiently and to anticipate the future materials requirements of the Nation and the world, the Commission to submit to the President and Congress a report on its findings and recommendations no later than June 30, 1973, ninety days after the submission of which it should cease to exist.

Executive Documents

FEDERAL COMPLIANCE WITH POLLUTION CONTROL STANDARDS

For provisions relating to the responsibility of the head of each Executive agency for compliance with applicable pollution control standards, see Ex. Ord. No. 12088, Oct. 13, 1978, 43 F.R. 47707, set out as a note under section 4321 of this title.

§ 6901a. Congressional findings: used oil recycling

The Congress finds and declares that—

- (1) used oil is a valuable source of increasingly scarce energy and materials;
- (2) technology exists to re-refine, reprocess, reclaim, and otherwise recycle used oil;
- (3) used oil constitutes a threat to public health and the environment when reused or disposed of improperly; and

that, therefore, it is in the national interest to recycle used oil in a manner which does not constitute a threat to public health and the environment and which conserves energy and materials.

(Pub. L. 96-463, §2, Oct. 15, 1980, 94 Stat. 2055.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was enacted as part of the Used Oil Recycling Act of 1980, and not as part of the Solid Waste Disposal Act which comprises this chapter.

§ 6902. Objectives and national policy

(a) Objectives

The objectives of this chapter are to promote the protection of health and the environment and to conserve valuable material and energy resources by—

- (1) providing technical and financial assistance to State and local governments and interstate agencies for the development of solid waste management plans (including resource recovery and resource conservation systems) which will promote improved solid waste management techniques (including more effective organizational arrangements), new and improved methods of collection, separation, and recovery of solid waste, and the environmentally safe disposal of nonrecoverable residues;
- (2) providing training grants in occupations involving the design, operation, and maintenance of solid waste disposal systems;

(3) prohibiting future open dumping on the land and requiring the conversion of existing open dumps to facilities which do not pose a danger to the environment or to health;

(4) assuring that hazardous waste management practices are conducted in a manner which protects human health and the environment;

(5) requiring that hazardous waste be properly managed in the first instance thereby reducing the need for corrective action at a future date;

(6) minimizing the generation of hazardous waste and the land disposal of hazardous waste by encouraging process substitution, materials recovery, properly conducted recycling and reuse, and treatment;

(7) establishing a viable Federal-State partnership to carry out the purposes of this chapter and insuring that the Administrator will, in carrying out the provisions of subchapter III of this chapter, give a high priority to assisting and cooperating with States in obtaining full authorization of State programs under subchapter III;

(8) providing for the promulgation of guidelines for solid waste collection, transport, separation, recovery, and disposal practices and systems;

(9) promoting a national research and development program for improved solid waste management and resource conservation techniques, more effective organizational arrangements, and new and improved methods of collection, separation, and recovery, and recycling of solid wastes and environmentally safe disposal of nonrecoverable residues;

(10) promoting the demonstration, construction, and application of solid waste management, resource recovery, and resource conservation systems which preserve and enhance the quality of air, water, and land resources; and

(11) establishing a cooperative effort among the Federal, State, and local governments and private enterprise in order to recover valuable materials and energy from solid waste.

(b) National policy

The Congress hereby declares it to be the national policy of the United States that, wherever feasible, the generation of hazardous waste is to be reduced or eliminated as expeditiously as possible. Waste that is nevertheless generated should be treated, stored, or disposed of so as to minimize the present and future threat to human health and the environment.

(Pub. L. 89-272, title II, §1003, as added Pub. L. 94-580, §2, Oct. 21, 1976, 90 Stat. 2798; amended Pub. L. 98-616, title I, §101(b), Nov. 8, 1984, 98 Stat. 3224.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 3251 of this title, prior to the general amendment of the Solid Waste Disposal Act by Pub. L. 94-580.

AMENDMENTS

1984—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 98-616, §101(b)(1), designated existing provisions as subsec. (a).