

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**STATEMENT OF
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U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

February 26, 2004

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I am Marianne Horinko, Assistant Administrator of the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Also appearing today is Mr. Ben Grumbles, Acting Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Water. We are pleased to be here to discuss President Bush's budget request for EPA and our views on water infrastructure, brownfields, Superfund, and other programs that fall within the Agency's Offices of Water and Solid Waste and Emergency Response.

The President's budget provides the necessary funds for EPA to carry out our mission efficiently and effectively - to protect human health and safeguard the environment. The FY 2005 budget request is \$7.76 billion, which includes an increase from FY 2004 enacted levels for the brownfields program and a significant increase for Superfund cleanup construction.

The President's budget request reflects a continued commitment to protect our land, clean our air, and cleanse our water, efficiently and effectively - - without impairing the economy. The President' budget request includes increased funding for EPA's core operating programs for air, water, land, and enforcement.

OSWER PROGRAMS

Superfund

Once again, the President's budget requests a \$150 million increase for the Superfund remedial action program. This represents a \$124 million increase from FY 2004 appropriation levels. These funds are specifically targeted for cleanup construction activities, enabling the Agency to maintain cleanup progress at the more than 430 sites under construction and start construction cleanup at up to 12 additional Superfund sites over and above the cleanup EPA would have started in FY 2005. The additional funds will be used to begin construction at sites that pose the highest risk to human health and at sites that will reach construction completion over the next two years. The increase in the President's request will raise overall Superfund program funding to \$1.38 billion. The Superfund program not only protects human health and the environment by cleaning up toxic waste sites, but also works with both public and private partners to promote reuse and redevelopment of Superfund sites.

As of January 2004, cleanup construction has been completed at 892 private and federal

National Priority List (NPL) sites. Since the less complex sites have been cleaned up, the remaining sites present more challenges. Cleanup construction projects are under way or completed at 93 percent of the sites on the NPL. In FY 2005, EPA expects the Superfund program to complete cleanup construction at 40 Superfund sites. This target continues to reflect the number of large, complex sites that have entered or are ready to enter the construction phase of the Superfund program. Last year, EPA added several new factors to measure Superfund program progress - - sites that have controls in place to prevent human exposure and sites with controls in place to prevent the spread of contaminated ground water.

The Superfund removal and emergency response program started 381 removal starts in FY 2003, and to date, has completed more than 7,000 removals at toxic waste sites to immediately reduce the threat to human health and the environment. In the past year, the program responded to the aftermath of the Space Shuttle Columbia accident, recovering more than 84,000 pounds of material, and more recently to the Ricin contamination found in U.S. Senate Office buildings.

Brownfields

The President's FY 2005 budget requests \$210.7 million for the brownfields program. This represents a \$40 million increase for brownfields cleanup funding from FY 2004 appropriation levels. To date, EPA funding has generated more than 4,400 brownfield site assessments and leveraged more than \$5 billion in cleanup and redevelopment funds. Through FY 2005, EPA will have provided more than 700 communities with assessment funding as well as 300 communities with cleanup funding. In FY 2005, the Agency estimates that EPA funding will be used to conduct 1000 brownfield site assessments which will leverage roughly \$1 billion in cleanup and redevelopment.

EPA is committed to building and enhancing effective partnerships that allow us to safeguard and restore land across America. Brownfields cleanup and redevelopment remains one of the Administration's top environmental priorities. The brownfields program will draw on these additional resources to enhance State and Tribal response programs that restore and reclaim contaminated and potentially contaminated sites. By protecting land and revitalizing contaminated sites throughout the United States, EPA continues to expand efforts to foster healthy and economically sustainable communities.

Oil Spill Program

The President's budget request provides \$16.4 million for EPA's oil program. EPA's oil program focuses on preventing oil spills from occurring, reduces the risk of hazardous exposure to people and the environment, and responds to spills when necessary. More than 20,000 spills are reported to the Federal government each year. EPA evaluates as many as 13,000 spills to determine if its assistance is required. On average, EPA either manages the oil spill response or oversees response efforts of private parties at approximately 300 sites per year.

EPA's spill prevention efforts protect inland waterways through oil spill prevention,

preparedness, and enforcement activities associated with the more than 400,000 non-transportation related oil storage facilities that EPA regulates.

Homeland Security - Emergency Response

EPA plays a vital role in responding to hazardous material releases and preparing for, and responding to, terrorist or other intentional incidents because of our unique expertise and experience in emergency preparedness and response. The President's budget requests \$27.3 million for OSWER to provide targeted investments to strengthen the Agency's readiness and response capabilities, including the development of a dedicated "decontamination team," for the cleanup of critical buildings and infrastructure, state-of-the-art equipment, and highly specialized training for On Scene Coordinators (OSCs). For example, in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), EPA OSCs provided incident command support as part of the Space Shuttle Columbia response. EPA will continue to conduct research and provide guidance and technical support for Federal, state, and local governments, and other institutions in the areas of building decontamination, water security, and rapid risk assessment.

INITIATIVES

EPA continues to focus on revitalization and innovation initiatives to promote a cleaner environment, encourage recycling and waste minimization, and advance innovative approaches to environmental challenges.

The Resource Conservation Challenge (RCC)

The Resource Conservation Challenge (RCC) is a voluntary program that seeks to improve resource conservation by developing partnerships with businesses, manufacturers, and consumers in key areas: product stewardship, priority chemical reduction, beneficial use of materials, energy conservation, and environmentally friendly design. When the RCC was launched in September 2002, we identified two goals: increasing the national recycling rate and reducing the generation of priority chemicals in hazardous wastes. We are beginning to identify additional goals that will lead to further resource conservation.

Some of the approaches EPA is using to help meet its goals, include: forming partnerships such as the National Waste Minimization Partnership Program; stimulating infrastructure development; providing education, training, outreach and technology assistance to businesses, government organizations, institutions and Tribes; and educating and increasing environmental awareness among consumers - - including youth and underserved communities. As an example, the RCC set a goal to reduce by 50 percent the presence of priority chemicals in hazardous wastes by 2005. Using a baseline that was set in 1991, this goal has already been met, with a reduction of 53 percent. For 2008, the RCC is developing a new goal that will not only seek to further reduce priority chemicals in hazardous wastes, but also expanding the goal to all solid wastes and releases to the environment. This effort is a true collaboration, and it shows what can be accomplished when EPA and our external stakeholders work toward common goals.

Innovations Initiative

The Innovations Initiative supports land revitalization, recycling, waste minimization, energy recovery and partnerships through creative approaches. The pilot program funds innovative ideas to solving environmental challenges. For example, EPA is working with several Agency regions and states to develop one-call systems for institutional controls. In addition, EPA, working with the State of North Carolina, piloted a process to take pallet wood waste and convert it into flooring products, diverting three tons of waste from landfills. In fiscal year 2003, EPA selected 19 innovative pilots totaling \$800,000. In fiscal year 2004, EPA plans to select 12 to 20 pilots. States, Tribes, local governments and external stakeholders are being encouraged to participate by submitting applications. The innovation projects are coordinated and selected by a workgroup comprised of EPA Regions and Headquarters. EPA is also developing a series of other activities, including training, awards, and industry pilots.

CONCLUSION

I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee to address the Superfund and brownfields programs, and other programs entrusted to the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. The President's budget request for EPA will help ensure that we are able to accomplish the Agency's important mission - to protect human health and safeguard the environment.