

Public Law 104-119
104th Congress

An Act

Mar. 26, 1996
[H.R. 2036]

To amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act to make certain adjustments in the land disposal program to provide needed flexibility, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Land Disposal
Program
Flexibility
Act of 1996.
Environmental
protection.
42 USC 6901
note.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Land Disposal Program Flexibility Act of 1996”.

SEC. 2. LAND DISPOSAL RESTRICTIONS.

Section 3004(g) of the Solid Waste Disposal Act is amended by adding after paragraph (6) the following:

“(7) Solid waste identified as hazardous based solely on one or more characteristics shall not be subject to this subsection, any prohibitions under subsection (d), (e), or (f), or any requirement promulgated under subsection (m) (other than any applicable specific methods of treatment, as provided in paragraph (8)) if the waste—

“(A) is treated in a treatment system that subsequently discharges to waters of the United States pursuant to a permit issued under section 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (commonly known as the “Clean Water Act”) (33 U.S.C. 1342), treated for the purposes of the pretreatment requirements of section 307 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1317), or treated in a zero discharge system that, prior to any permanent land disposal, engages in treatment that is equivalent to treatment required under section 402 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1342) for discharges to waters of the United States, as determined by the Administrator; and

“(B) no longer exhibits a hazardous characteristic prior to management in any land-based solid waste management unit.

“(8) Solid waste that otherwise qualifies under paragraph (7) shall nevertheless be required to meet any applicable specific methods of treatment specified for such waste by the Administrator under subsection (m), including those specified in the rule promulgated by the Administrator June 1, 1990, prior to management in a land-based unit as part of a treatment system specified in paragraph (7)(A). No solid waste may qualify under paragraph (7) that would generate toxic gases, vapors, or fumes due to the presence of cyanide when exposed to pH conditions between 2.0 and 12.5.

42 USC 6924.

“(9) Solid waste identified as hazardous based on one or more characteristics alone shall not be subject to this subsection, any prohibitions under subsection (d), (e), or (f), or any requirement promulgated under subsection (m) if the waste no longer exhibits a hazardous characteristic at the point of injection in any Class I injection well permitted under section 1422 of title XIV of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300h-1).

“(10) Not later than five years after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Administrator shall complete a study of hazardous waste managed pursuant to paragraph (7) or (9) to characterize the risks to human health or the environment associated with such management. In conducting this study, the Administrator shall evaluate the extent to which risks are adequately addressed under existing State or Federal programs and whether unaddressed risks could be better addressed under such laws or programs. Upon receipt of additional information or upon completion of such study and as necessary to protect human health and the environment, the Administrator may impose additional requirements under existing Federal laws, including subsection (m)(1), or rely on other State or Federal programs or authorities to address such risks. In promulgating any treatment standards pursuant to subsection (m)(1) under the previous sentence, the Administrator shall take into account the extent to which treatment is occurring in land-based units as part of a treatment system specified in paragraph (7)(A).

“(11) Nothing in paragraph (7) or (9) shall be interpreted or applied to restrict any inspection or enforcement authority under the provisions of this Act.”

SEC. 3. GROUND WATER MONITORING.

(a) AMENDMENT OF SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL ACT.—Section 4010(c) of the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6949a(c)) is amended as follows:

(1) By striking “CRITERIA.—Not later” and inserting the following: “CRITERIA.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later”.

(2) By adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(2) ADDITIONAL REVISIONS.—Subject to paragraph (3), the requirements of the criteria described in paragraph (1) relating to ground water monitoring shall not apply to an owner or operator of a new municipal solid waste landfill unit, an existing municipal solid waste landfill unit, or a lateral expansion of a municipal solid waste landfill unit, that disposes of less than 20 tons of municipal solid waste daily, based on an annual average, if—

“(A) there is no evidence of ground water contamination from the municipal solid waste landfill unit or expansion; and

“(B) the municipal solid waste landfill unit or expansion serves—

“(i) a community that experiences an annual interruption of at least 3 consecutive months of surface transportation that prevents access to a regional waste management facility; or

“(ii) a community that has no practicable waste management alternative and the landfill unit is located in an area that annually receives less than or equal to 25 inches of precipitation.

“(3) PROTECTION OF GROUND WATER RESOURCES.—

“(A) MONITORING REQUIREMENT.—A State may require ground water monitoring of a solid waste landfill unit that would otherwise be exempt under paragraph (2) if necessary to protect ground water resources and ensure compliance with a State ground water protection plan, where applicable.

“(B) METHODS.—If a State requires ground water monitoring of a solid waste landfill unit under subparagraph (A), the State may allow the use of a method other than the use of ground water monitoring wells to detect a release of contamination from the unit.

“(C) CORRECTIVE ACTION.—If a State finds a release from a solid waste landfill unit, the State shall require corrective action as appropriate.

“(4) NO-MIGRATION EXEMPTION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Ground water monitoring requirements may be suspended by the Director of an approved State for a landfill operator if the operator demonstrates that there is no potential for migration of hazardous constituents from the unit to the uppermost aquifer during the active life of the unit and the post-closure care period.

“(B) CERTIFICATION.—A demonstration under subparagraph (A) shall be certified by a qualified ground-water scientist and approved by the Director of an approved State.

“(C) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Administrator shall issue a guidance document to facilitate small community use of the no migration exemption under this paragraph.

“(5) ALASKA NATIVE VILLAGES.—Upon certification by the Governor of the State of Alaska that application of the requirements described in paragraph (1) to a solid waste landfill unit of a Native village (as defined in section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (16 U.S.C. 1602)) or unit that is located in or near a small, remote Alaska village would be infeasible, or would not be cost-effective, or is otherwise inappropriate because of the remote location of the unit, the State may exempt the unit from some or all of those requirements. This paragraph shall apply only to solid waste landfill units that dispose of less than 20 tons of municipal solid waste daily, based on an annual average.

“(6) FURTHER REVISIONS OF GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA.—Recognizing the unique circumstances of small communities, the Administrator shall, not later than two years after enactment of this provision promulgate revisions to the guidelines and criteria promulgated under this subtitle to provide additional flexibility to approved States to allow landfills that receive 20 tons or less of municipal solid waste per day, based on an annual average, to use alternative frequencies of daily cover application, frequencies of methane gas monitoring, infiltration layers for final cover, and means for demonstrating

financial assurance: *Provided*, That such alternative requirements take into account climatic and hydrogeologic conditions and are protective of human health and environment.”

(b) REINSTATEMENT OF REGULATORY EXEMPTION.—It is the intent of section 4010(c)(2) of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as added by subsection (a), to immediately reinstate subpart E of part 258 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, as added by the final rule published at 56 Federal Register 50798 on October 9, 1991. 42 USC 6949a note.

SEC. 4. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL ACT.

The Solid Waste Disposal Act is amended as follows:

(1) In section 3001(d)(5) by striking “under section 3001” and inserting “under this section”. 42 USC 6921.

(2) By inserting a semicolon at the end of section 3004(q)(1)(C). 42 USC 6924.

(3) In section 3004(g), by striking “subparagraph (A) through (C)” in paragraph (5) and inserting “subparagraphs (A) through (C)”.

(4) In section 3004(r)(2)(C), by striking “petroleum-derived” and inserting “petroleum-derived”.

(5) In section 3004(r)(3) by inserting after “Standard” the word “Industrial”.

(6) In section 3005(a), by striking “polychlorinated” and inserting “polychlorinated”. 42 USC 6925.

(7) In section 3005(e)(1), by inserting a comma at the end of subparagraph (C).

(8) In section 4007(a), by striking “4003” in paragraphs (1) and (2)(A) and inserting “4003(a)”. 42 USC 6947.

Approved March 26, 1996.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 2036:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 104-454 (Comm. on Commerce).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 142 (1996):

Jan. 30, 31, considered and passed House.

Feb. 20, considered and passed Senate, amended.

Mar. 7, House concurred in Senate amendments.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 32 (1996):

Mar. 26, Presidential statement.