

CDM

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February 11, 1986

The Honorable George W. Crockett, Jr.
1531 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

TC

Dear Honorable Crockett:

The clean up of hazardous wastes is the most serious environmental challenge to the nation. Thousands of sites identified under the CERCLA, better known as Superfund, and companion state laws, await proper treatment.

The very existence of the program is, however, threatened because reauthorization has been delayed. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced it is planning to stop all Superfund work because the program is almost out of money.

The cost to the nation both in terms of dollars, and time lost solving the problems of hazardous waste, could be devastating. In your state alone there are seven sites being cleaned up under Superfund. If the program ends, work at these sites will stop and the 417,000 citizens who live around them will be left unprotected.

I am requesting your assistance in finding a way to keep the Superfund program alive. If the program is closed, even temporarily, the effect on the program's structure, and indeed on all of EPA's structure, would be devastating. Because EPA has to furlough civil servants by seniority, not by program, there would be a ripple effect throughout the entire agency - beyond the 1500 people who would be furloughed. In fact, all of EPA would probably have to be reorganized. When furlough notices are issued, these highly skilled and trained professionals may leave government service, and they will be hard to replace.

If the program is stopped, all of the current Superfund contracts will be terminated. To recontract all of the Superfund work could take a year or longer - that would be one year lost in our effort to clean the country's hazardous and toxic waste sites. In the meantime, work on the Superfund sites would stop. EPA would have to close the sites off and walk away.

Many associated with the program agree that a delay in the work at this time would come at a point when the program was truly moving forward. The system is in place and progress is being made.