

SUMMARY OF ROUND 3 “SUPERFUND REFORMS” (October 1995)

On October 1995, EPA Administrator Carol Browner announced the 3rd and final round of “Superfund Reforms.” This introduced 20 new “common sense” reforms to the Superfund program designed to make the Superfund program faster, fairer and more efficient. Administrator Browner called upon Congress to complete the reform of Superfund through legislative changes, noting that these administrative improvements represent the final changes that can be made to the program without reauthorizing the law.

These highlights of the 3rd round of Superfund Reforms are intended to assist State and local governments, communities, and industries involved in cleanups to more easily:

- Make cost-effective cleanup choices that protect public health and the environment by: assuring more consistency; streamlining processes to save time and money; and creating new choices for cost-effective cleanup options and encouraging economic development. Another reform will be to establish cost-effectiveness “rules of thumb” and an EPA National Remedy Review Board that will ensure that costs are appropriate to cleanup needs.
- Reduce litigation so more time can be spent on cleanup and less on lawyers through increased fairness in the enforcement program by: 1) compensating settling parties for a portion of the “orphan shares,” or cleanup costs that are attributable to insolvent parties; and 2) reducing transactions costs by doubling the number of “small party” entities potentially liable at Superfund sites.
- Help communities become more informed and involved so that cleanup decisions make the most sense at the community level by: establishing a greater role for States and tribes in remedy selection; providing clearer information on remedy selection decisions; providing clearer information on remedy selection decisions through simple summary sheets; promoting pilot efforts to create cleanup options in communities; and providing forums for stakeholder concerns by establishing an ombudsman in each Region to help resolve stakeholder concerns.

On December 6, 1995, EPA released the Superfund Reforms Implementation Plan for the 3rd Round of Superfund Reforms. This plan includes contacts, participants, a brief summary, and milestones.

The accomplishments for the 3rd round of reforms are highlighted in the Scorecard and the current annual report.