



*The
Resource
Conservation
and
Recovery
Act of
1976*

*A Brief Look at
Public Law*

94-580

■ This Act, built on the foundation of the Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1965 and the Resource Recovery Act of 1970, is the evolutionary product of years of deliberations and hearings. The Congress intended RCRA to address the following problems:

- 1★ The ever-increasing amounts of waste material being generated as a result of National economic and population growth.
- 2★ Serious financial, management, intergovernmental, and technical problems in solid waste collection, treatment and disposal in urban areas resulting from population concentration.
- 3★ Open dumping of solid waste which needlessly pollutes valuable land resources as well as air and water resources.
- 4★ Human health and environmental dangers resulting from improper disposal of solid waste and especially hazardous waste.
- 5★ Increasing amounts of pollution control residuals (sludges, etc.) destined for land disposal as a result of the Clean Air Act, Water Pollution Control Act, and other Federal and State laws.
- 6★ The wasteful burial of recoverable resources with attendant increases in dependence on foreign energy and material sources, and in bal-

ance of payment deficits.

- 7★The need to continue the development of solid waste as an energy source to conserve and reduce dependence on alternate energy sources such as petroleum, natural gas, nuclear and hydroelectric generation.

■ The stated objectives of RCRA are to promote the protection of health and the environment and to conserve valuable material and energy resources. The Act intends that these objectives be achieved by:

- 1★ Providing technical and financial assistance to State and local governments for development and implementation of solid waste management plans.
- 2★ Providing training grants in solid waste occupations.
- 3★ Prohibiting future open dumping on land and requiring upgrading or closing of existing open dumps.
- 4★ Regulating the treatment, storage, transportation, and disposal of hazardous wastes.
- 5★ Promulgation of guidelines for solid waste management practices and systems.
- 6★ Conducting a research and development program for improved solid waste management and resource conservation techniques.
- 7★ Demonstration of improved

solid waste management and resource conservation and recovery systems.

- 8 ★ Establishing a cooperative effort among Federal, State, and local governments and private enterprises.

■ *The* Act statutorily establishes the Office of Solid Waste within EPA to guide the implementation of the law and establishes a Federal/State/local government partnership to share the implementation. The major thrusts of the efforts that will be required by this partnership are:

- 1 ★ Land protection through regulation and control of wastes and waste disposal operations.
- 2 ★ Regulations and control of the hazardous waste stream "cradle to grave."
- 3 ★ Improvements in all aspects of waste management at the State, regional and local levels.
- 4 ★ Reduction of the waste stream through increased resource recovery and waste reduction efforts.
- 5 ★ Broad public education programs with rapid dissemination of all types of solid waste management information materials.
- 6 ★ Broad public participation in the development and improvement of solid waste management throughout the Nation.