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Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

## STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I have approved S. 2150, the "Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976."

I believe this bill provides a workable program aimed at solving one of the highest priority environmental problems confronting the Nation, the disposal of hazardous wastes. This legislation provides for State responsibility for the control of hazardous wastes while at the same time assuring uniform national standards for the protection of public health and welfare. The legislation also provides sound State and local programs to deal with ever increasing amounts of municipal solid wastes generated in this country.

These new controls over hazardous wastes will assure that such wastes are disposed of in a manner which is protective of public health and environmentally sound. The Act directs the Federal Government through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish criteria for identifying and listing of hazardous wastes; to promulgate standards for generators and transporters of hazardous wastes; and to establish permit requirements for the owners and operators of sites disposing such wastes. States are encouraged to issue these permits in lieu of the Federal Government. Civil and criminal penalties are provided to insure compliance with the Act.

The legislation also provides for State and local development of methods for solid waste management which are environmentally sound and which will encourage the utilization of valuable resources and resource conservation. This will be accomplished through Federal financial and technical assistance to State and local communities for planning and implementing alternatives that address the management, intergovernmental, financial and technical problems associated with the disposal of solid wastes. Federal guidelines for State and regional planning will include information on solid waste management practices, resource recovery measures, and guidance for the gradual elimination of open dumps. This latter provision is aimed at ensuring the protection of the quality of ground and surface waters from leachate and surface runoff contamination, and the protection of ambient air quality.

Provision is also made in the Act for EPA to conduct and encourage studies of resource recovery systems, fuel recovery from solid wastes, and solid waste reduction; the Administrator of EPA will serve as Chairman of a Resource Conservation Committee which will study economic incentives and product charges, and EPA could enter into contracts with and provide financial assistance for full-scale demonstration facilities.

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Finally, the legislation recognizes that the real impediments to local development of resource recovery facilities are not financial, but institutional and technical, in nature. Its enactment will thus lead to greater encouragement of the market forces capable of generating demand for recovered materials.

I believe this legislation is another step forward in improving the quality of the environment.

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