

**RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT**

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*Cleaning Up  
Toxic Waste*

"The Elusive Pursuit of Toxics Management"  
by Daniel Mazmanian and David Morell, in *The  
Public Interest* (Winter 1988), 1112 16th St.  
N.W., Ste. 545, Washington, D.C. 20036.

During the past decade, government controls on the storage and disposal of toxic waste have greatly tightened. Each fresh discovery of an abandoned hazardous-materials dump brings more stringent regulation by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and its state counterparts.

But "few if any" of their remedies have really worked, say Mazmanian, a professor at the Claremont Graduate School, and Morell, a vice-president of Exceltech, a California environmental engineering firm. Corporate resistance, combined with the EPA's weak enforcement powers, have led, understandably, to growing public frustration.

The first efforts to solve the toxic-waste problem were market-oriented, with industry bearing most of the costs. But impatient government regulators soon pressed for more draconian rules. These rules failed, however. Consider the fate of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1984. Rather than pay for newly mandated improvements to existing conventional landfill dumps (such as the installation of multi-layered liners), operators simply closed down more than a third of them. Meanwhile, the construction of waste *treatment* plants lagged, in part because of community resistance. Nearly all dangerous wastes continue to be sent to inadequate landfills, surface impoundments, and injection wells.

Nonetheless, economic incentives remain the best method of solving the fearsome toxic waste problem. The authors urge less reliance on "uniform rules promulgated by distant federal agencies" and more freedom for local initiatives. For instance, a "fee-and-rebate" system similar to the deposits paid on returnable bottles holds promise: A bill before the New Jersey legislature would increase the state corporate income tax from 9 to 9½ percent—*except* for industries that gain state certification for compliance with toxic-waste disposal laws.

Corporations and environmentalists, add the authors, should begin to work with rather than against each other. Corporate managers should seek the advice of local environmentalists by appointing them to advisory boards to oversee plant operations. The latter, in turn, should temper their unrealistic demands for "zero-risk" factories.

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**ARTS & LETTERS**

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*A Lost Art*

"Hollywood Romantic Comedy" by Robert  
Garis, in *Raritan* (Winter 1988), Rutgers  
Univ., 165 College Ave., New Brunswick, N.J.  
08903.

The Hollywood directors of the 1930s and '40s perfected many film genres, notably the swashbuckling pirate adventures of Errol Flynn and the hard-boiled crime dramas (*Little Caesar*, *High Sierra*) that starred Edward G. Robinson or Humphrey Bogart.