

FEDERAL NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



ENVIRONMENT

ASSURANCE MECHANISMS FINALIZED FOR OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE LANDFILLS

■ (WASHINGTON) The Environmental Protection Agency issued a final rule that gives local governments more flexibility to meet the financial assurance requirements of the Municipal Solid Waste Landfill Criteria.

The promulgation of the Local Government Financial Test allows local governments to meet their financial assurance obligations for closure, post-closure care and corrective action pursuant to the Municipal Solid Waste Landfill Criteria. The effective date for these financial assurance requirements is April 9, 1997, for landfill owners and operators except for small, dry or remote landfill owners and operators who have until Oct. 9, 1997.

A local government can make this demonstration by showing that it has issued a general obligation bond for which it received an investment grade rating. A municipality can also show that its cash holdings and debt obligations pass established ratios and thereby meet the financial assurance requirements. In addition, a local government cannot have an excessive operating deficit for each of the last two years relative to the local government's total budget.

Local governments must report annually on whether they continue to meet the conditions of the test and inform the public that they are using the test. Local governments that pass the financial test can also assure obligations for other landfill owners and operators if they choose to do so.

An estimated 91 percent of local governments can use their financial strength to assure at least part of their obligations and 54 percent can assure all of their obligations using the local government financial test. Those local governments that are eligible to

exercise this options can realize substantial cost savings in complying with the Criteria. This rule also gives state directors the authority to waive the financial assurance requirements for up to 12 months for good cause in specific cases where the April 9, 1997, deadline does not provide sufficient time to comply with these requirements and where such a waiver will not adversely affect human health and the environment.

For more information, contact the RCRA/ Superfund Hotline at 1-800-424-9336.

—ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
11/26/96

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

WATKINS WINS WAYS & MEANS SEAT

■ (GIT) Oklahoma's Third District pseudo-freshman Congressman Wes Watkins got what he bargained for Friday after winning election to the House of Representatives in this month's general election — a seat on the prestigious Ways and Means Committee.

Watkins, who represented the district for 14 years as a Democrat, was one of two Republican freshmen, named to fill three open slots on the panel, which is heavily involved in tax writing.

During his campaign, Watkins admitted that a promise of a slot on the committee from House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Georgia, played a role in his move from independent — the banner under which he sought the state's governorship in 1994 — to Republican. His conversion to independent followed 14 years as a Democratic representative for the district and a failed 1990 bid for party's gubernatorial nomination.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
11/25/96

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES FOOD RECOVERY POLICY

■ (WASHINGTON) The Clinton Administration put the emphasis on the "thanks" and the "giving" last week as the President announced that it would be the federal government's policy to promote and to practice gleaning and food recovery.

In his weekly radio address last Saturday President Clinton said he will sign a directive making it his administration's policy

to promote food recovery and to assure that no wholesome food goes to waste that can be provided to those in need. The President directed every federal agency to actively work to recover surplus food from their cafeterias, commissaries, public events and other food service facilities and to encourage state, local, and non-governmental partners and grantees to participate.

The President also announced that the Department of Agriculture would release "A Citizen's Guide to Food Recovery" — a guidebook for getting prepared, perishable food that would otherwise be thrown away to those people who need it.

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said, "The resource guide will make it easier for individuals, groups, and businesses to get involved in gleaning and food recovery efforts, nationally and in their own communities. It will provide information on starting such an effort and give names and addresses of charities involved in these efforts."

The President also established an inter-agency task force on gleaning and food recovery to carry out the new policy and to assist agencies with food recovery efforts. Glickman will chair the working group comprised of all federal agencies.

As part of his continuing efforts, Glickman:

- Established a toll free number (1-800 GLEAN IT) to facilitate food recovery efforts;
- Sponsored four farmers' markets (and a fifth Tuesday) where at the end of the day, the D.C. Central Kitchen recovered about 800 pounds of food not sold and distributed it to needy families in Washington, D.C.;
- Hosted a national round table to discuss food recovery and two regional meetings to talk about dismantling barriers to food donation.

Citizens can obtain "A Citizen's Guide to Food Recovery" by calling 1-800-GLEAN IT.

—U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
11/25/96

NEW PROGRAM HELPS STUDENT ATHLETES AVOID STEROIDS USE

■ (WASHINGTON) A new drug prevention and education program called ATLAS (Adolescents Training and Learning to Avoid Steroids) is extremely effective in preventing use of anabolic steroids among high school

Continued on next page

"Men may be popular without being ambitious; but there is rarely an ambitious man who does not try to be popular."

*Frederick North, 8th Baron North
speech in the House of Commons
March, 1769*