

# GROUNDWATER NEWSLETTER

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## RMCLS SET AT ZERO FOR SEVEN CHEMICALS

The EPA has proposed a recommended maximum contaminant level (RMCL) of zero for seven volatile synthetic organic chemicals under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The chemicals are benzene, carbon tetrachloride, 1,2-dichloroethane, 1,1-dichloroethylene, tetrachloroethylene, trichloroethylene and vinyl chloride. Two others, which are not proven animal carcinogens - 1,1,1-trichloroethane, and 1,4-dichlorobenzene, have been given recommended levels of 0.2 mg/L and 0.75 mg/L respectively. RMCLs are not enforceable but represent the first step in setting enforceable standards. EPA is required to set RMCLs at a point that involves absolutely no health risk. The zero levels are not achievable and the final enforceable levels will have to be higher.

## SUPERFUND REAUTHORIZATION FACES DELAYS

Despite the House Energy Committee's approval of a \$9 billion cleanup bill, the expanded Superfund is facing resistance and delays in both the House and Senate. The Senate Environment Committee has not acted on the legislation and observers predict that a bill will not get to the floor before late fall. In the House, the measure still has to be approved by two other committees where opponents are preparing to fight certain provisions such as the number of years that the chemical industry can extend its feedstock tax payments.

## WATERGRAMS

Waste Management Inc. has made a \$300 million bid to acquire SCA Services Inc., a major rival. If successful, the firm would be adding to its more than 30 solid waste disposal facilities in 26 states. Observers speculate that to avoid anti-trust complications, Waste Management would sell off some of SCA's sanitary landfills. Retaining the chemical waste facilities and landfills seems likely, especially SCA's secure sites at Ft. Wayne, Ind.; Pinewood, S.C.; and Miles City, N.Y. described as "among the newest in the industry." //A memorandum recently sent to EPA Administrator William D. Ruckelshaus offers advice on how the agency might better educate the public about the true nature of environmental risks, what reasonably can be done about them and at what cost. The memorandum provides an index of words and phrases "associated with dread" that are presumably to be avoided including "uncontrollable," "globally catastrophic," "consequences fatal," "high risk to future generations," "involuntary" and "affects me."