

Mr. Speaker, this statue is a fitting tribute to the spirit of the Olympic games, and to the determination, skill, and camaraderie of the athletes who have competed in the Olympics over the millennia. I am honored that one of my constituents has made such an outstanding contribution to the Centennial Olympic games in Atlanta. I want to recognize Peter Calaboyias today on the House floor and commend him for creating this remarkable work of art.

**BILL TO AMEND THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RECOVERY ACT**

**HON. JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 2, 1996*

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform my colleagues of a bill I'm introducing to toughen Federal laws regulating hazardous waste facilities. Hazardous waste treatment and disposal is regulated by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act [RCRA]. Since RCRA was enacted in 1976, we have made dramatic progress in improving oversight of hazardous waste through a flexible regulatory structure in which States have the primary role in enforcing the statute. The bill I introduce today takes three simple, but powerful, further steps to assist State environmental agencies in protecting the environment from hazardous wastes.

First, the bill requires the Administrator of the EPA to certify that authorized State RCRA programs include standards for the siting of hazardous waste facilities. Currently, a number of States have no regular standards which guard against the placement of hazardous waste facilities in environmentally sensitive or unstable areas. These States operate on an ad hoc basis when making permitting decisions. But the ad hoc approach has two weaknesses. The public is left with little to no information to judge whether a particular site represents a true danger to public health, and business is left with little certainty as to which sites are likely to garner approval. Standards which preclude siting in places like flood plains, karst terrain, or over important aquifers will clear up this confusion for both parties. And the bill allows each State the flexibility to tailor standards to its own needs and conditions.

Second, it authorizes the States to fund their RCRA programs through permit fees, and requires the EPA to determine for each State the cost of fully maintaining its program. In many States, taxpayers are funding RCRA programs from general revenues. Not only is this unfair, since the burden of supporting oversight functions properly belongs to those who treat and dispose of the waste, but it often leads to underfunding of State programs. This bill provides every State the opportunity and the ability to recover these costs through permits fees in accordance with the polluter pays principle.

Third, the bill corrects the problem that owners of hazardous waste facilities who are currently violating State or Federal environmental laws are still legally eligible to receive and do receive new operating permits. The third part of my bill, called a good-guy provision, pre-

vents any company which is violating State or Federal environmental laws from obtaining a permit for a hazardous waste facility. This provision provides a strong incentive for operators to obey laws designed to protect public safety and minimize environmental risks.

I have a particular interest in ensuring that hazardous waste facilities are safe because my congressional district is adjacent to a hazardous waste landfill in Sumter County, SC—the second largest hazardous waste landfill in the Southeast, and my district formerly hosted a hazardous waste incinerator in Rock Hill, SC, which is now a reprocessing facility. Both have experienced problems, and I believe facilities of this kind would benefit from stricter Federal laws. I know the general public would benefit. Similar situations exist in almost every congressional district in the country. That's why this legislation is appropriate and deserves the support of the entire Congress.

I believe this bill represents modest but important change in environmental law. Hazardous waste facilities will continue to pose a danger to our health and the environment, but this legislation can help minimize that risk.

**ABANDONED AND DERELICT VESSEL REMOVAL ACT OF 1996**

**HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 2, 1996*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Removal Act of 1996. This act will provide the necessary tools to encourage the cleanup of a long-term public nuisance resulting from abandoned boats and barges found in the navigable waters of many communities in this country.

This issue centers on dozens of abandoned boats and other debris which has accumulated along the Guadalupe Channel, which surrounds the community of Alviso, CA. This concern was first brought to my attention by members of the San Jose City Council, the Alviso Master Plan Task Force and, most important, members of the Alviso community. These abandoned vessels have become a public health and safety hazard to both the community as well as to those that use the adjacent public waterways. Unfortunately, Alviso is far from the only community that suffers from this problem.

The Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Removal Act also make sense economically. Abandoned vessels do not just sit harmlessly by—these vessels are often used as an illegal dumping ground for hazardous materials. Cleaning up this mess is both expensive, time consuming, and places the health of the community in jeopardy. Between January 1988 and September 1991, the Federal Government spent \$5.2 million to remove 282 abandoned vessels that blocked waterways. In that same time, Government spent nearly \$5.7 million to clean up pollutants from just 96 abandoned vessels. This legislation would cut cleanup costs to the Government by more than 300 percent.

This legislation will establish clear authority to remove vessels left unattended in a public waterway that has not been designated as a harbor or marina for more than 45 days or

those left unattended in an approved harbor or marina for more than 60 days. There are approximately 17 million recreational boaters using public waterways nationwide. It is estimated that this number will increase, on average, 4 percent per year. Given this substantial increase in waterway users, regulation becomes necessary.

This legislation empowers local authorities to keep public waterways clear while allowing boat or barge owners the opportunity to repair and remove vessels that are not actually abandoned. In addition, the removal of these derelict vessels will alleviate concerns regarding water quality and its impact on the public health of the local community.

This legislation will promote cooperation between interested local citizens, community groups, and government agencies in their joint efforts to preserve and protect the navigable waters of the United States, and it will return the power to take action to the communities and force boat owners to take responsibility for their vessels. A community could instigate action simply by petitioning a local elected official to notify the Secretary of the Army of the problem. Proceedings to notify the boat owner, and ultimately to remove the boat, would then be taken by the Secretary.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

H.R. —

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Removal Act of 1995".

**SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

In this Act, the following definitions apply:

(1) **ABANDON.**—The term "abandon" means to moor, strand, wreck, sink, or leave a vessel unattended for longer than 45 days.

(2) **NAVIGABLE WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES.**—The term "navigable waters of the United States" means waters of the United States, including the territorial sea.

(3) **REMOVAL; REMOVE.**—The term "removal" or "remove" means relocation, sale, scrapping, or other method of disposal.

(4) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Army.

(5) **VESSEL.**—The term "vessel" includes recreational, commercial, and government-owned vessels but does not include vessels operated by the Coast Guard or the Navy.

(6) **VESSEL REMOVAL CONTRACTOR.**—The term "vessel removal contractor" means a person that enters into a contract with the United States to remove an abandoned vessel under this Act.

**SEC. 3. ABANDONMENT OF VESSEL PROHIBITED.**

An owner or operator of a vessel may not abandon it on the navigable waters of the United States. A vessel is deemed not to be abandoned if—

(1) it is located at a federally or State-approved mooring area;

(2) it is on private property with the permission of the owner of the property; or

(3) the owner or operator notifies the Secretary that the vessel is not abandoned and the location of the vessel.

**SEC. 4. PENALTY FOR UNLAWFUL ABANDONMENT OF VESSEL.**

Thirty days after the notification procedures under section 5(a)(1) are completed, the Secretary may assess a civil penalty of not more than \$500 for each day of the violation against an owner or operator that violates section 3. A vessel with respect to which a penalty is assessed under this Act is liable in rem for the penalty.