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2021: D+

2025 REPORT CARD FOR AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE

Hazardous Waste

SUMMARY

The U.S. hazardous waste infrastructure currently manages about 36 million tons annually. Although concerns remain about long-term capacity and resilience, recent investments through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), including $3.5 billion for the Superfund program and $1.5 billion for Brownfields, have significantly improved cleanup efforts, accelerated the remediation of contaminated sites, and delivered public health and economic benefits.

However, the recent designation of certain PFAS as hazardous under CERCLA is expected to place new pressures on this infrastructure. Addressing PFAS contamination will require expanded site investigations, increased treatment capacity, and the development of new technologies to meet future remediation demands.

FAST FACTS

- Since its creation, the Superfund program has helped return 692 sites to reuse, supporting over 10,000 businesses and generating more than $18.8 billion in employment income.
- The IIJA provided $3.5 billion for the Superfund program, helping clear a backlog of 49 sites where cleanup had been stalled.
- The U.S. is currently on track to meet hazardous waste treatment and disposal needs through 2044. However, declining commercial incinerator capacity and a shortage of qualified transport drivers could jeopardize that outlook.

SOLUTIONS TO RAISE THE GRADE

- ✓ Establish a geologic repository for permanent storage of radioactive waste.
- ✓ Develop more accurate cost estimation tools to better plan and budget for future hazardous waste management and infrastructure needs.
- ✓ Strengthen the existing recycling system through investment and innovation.
- ✓ Invest in building capacity and resources for hazardous waste transportation.
- ✓ Increase investment in PFAS research to inform a sound regulatory framework.
- ✓ Expand hazardous waste incinerator capacity to meet growing demands.

To explore more solutions to raise the grades check out infrastructurereportcard.org

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