



STATEMENT
OF
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President and CEO

on behalf of the

Information Technology Association of America

BEFORE THE

**Subcommittee on Superfund and
Waste Management
of the
Senate Committee on the
Environment and Public Works**

September 28, 2006

Mr. Chairman, distinguished senators, on behalf of ITAA's 325 corporate members, I'd like to thank you for inviting us to share our perspective on allowing electronic tracking of hazardous waste. I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued leadership to amend the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) in order to make such a system possible.

The legislation before the subcommittee today is a creative approach to solving a problem on behalf of the U.S. taxpayer. Information technology drives innovation throughout the national and global economies. Throughout the economy, we see IT streamlining processes and making them more efficient. We see no reason why IT cannot streamline this reporting requirement while simultaneously enhancing our national security.

Our understanding is that EPA requires shippers to include the Uniform Manifest with hazardous waste shipments for two purposes. First, that information is needed by emergency responders in the event of an incident. Second, it allows the government to track every shipment all the way to the final disposal facility. Both are critical environmental, as well as national security goals.

Yet in this high-tech age, the paperwork burden from this process is enormous. In fact, it is the most expensive such burden that the EPA imposes under the federal hazardous waste law. Further, EPA's economic analysis estimates that over 92,000 regulated entities annually track 2.4 million shipments a year.

Each manifest form has seven or eight copies. Each of those copies must be manually filled out and signed with pen and ink signatures; physically carried with waste shipments; mailed to generators and state agencies; and finally, stored among facility records. Finally, some states charge a fee to help pay the cost of supplying paper forms and to defray the costs of processing the paper copies and converting the data into a useful, electronic format. To put it simply, this process is straight out of the last century – and it is just too costly, too manpower intensive, too cumbersome and too time consuming.

And, perhaps most importantly, because of the administrative burden, this information is not getting where it needs to go. Currently, 22 states and the EPA do not even collect copies. Those states that do receive copies often simply store them without review.

An e-manifest system would solve all of these problems and greatly enhance capability where it currently does not exist. It would help states – and the public – receive data more readily in a format they can use. Members of this committee and other national policymakers would know exponentially more about hazardous waste transportation in this country than they do today. And it is estimated that it would save over \$100 million every year.

A national e-manifest would also produce homeland security benefits. To know the nature of a shipment, its location, and the parties involved would take minutes or seconds instead of weeks. If a shipment were diverted for some sinister purpose or if a highly sensitive shipment were delayed because of mechanical failure or road or weather conditions, we can know this and be alerted in time to respond and do something about it.

Authentication is another issue to consider, but it is hardly an insurmountable problem in the 21st century. Congress itself accepts digital signatures as a secure way of authenticating electronic documents. Lobbying reports are required to be submitted on-line and are authenticated by digital signatures. Electronic signatures are also now widely accepted throughout the financial, legal and insurance sectors. And, an electronic process assured through the use of digital signatures would be more secure, not less secure, than the paper-based manifest process employed today.

Your proposal is an elegant solution to an ugly problem, and we commend you for your innovative 21st Century approach. Under this legislation, the EPA would be authorized to develop requirements and conduct a competitive bid. Bidding companies would be asked to create – at their own expense – proposed solutions for an e-manifest service. The winning bidder would be paid for their investment through a user fee established as part of the initiative by EPA.

This procurement could allow industry to make the initial investment in a solution while providing for a potential premium in return. The legislation allows private industry to share both risk and reward. Operational funding, capital costs and EPA administrative costs for the e-manifest system would also be generated from the fee. Without the legislation that you are considering, the fees collected would be considered federal revenues and prohibited from such uses. As we mentioned earlier, fees are already being collected to cover the cost of the manifest management process today, so we are not creating a new burden on the shippers or the government entities that must keep track of these shipments.

Finally, I'd like to note that this legislation upholds the broader aims of eGovernment. It makes a bureaucratic government process more efficient and enhances security along the way. It makes government better at what it does for the American people. All in a fiscally responsible manner. Which, from where I sit today, sounds like good government of, by and for the people.

Thank you.