

Superfund Taxes

Background

Superfund is the federal program created to pay for the cleanup of waste disposal sites that were abandoned or whose owners are bankrupt. It was created by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980. Federal spending on Superfund has remained stable, and future cleanups are not in jeopardy. Businesses that are responsible parties will continue paying for the cleanup of a large majority of Superfund sites, ensuring the continued application of the “polluter pays” principle.

Reinstating Superfund taxes will not guarantee a cleaner environment.



Congress should not reinstate Superfund taxes. Here's why.

Reinstatement of expired Superfund taxes is not necessary because responsible parties continue to pay for more than 70 percent of clean-ups, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

A wide range of individuals, businesses and government agencies are responsible for the pollution at the remaining 30 percent of so-called orphan sites. Congress has appropriately recognized the cost as a broad societal problem and provided general revenues for cleanups.

Reinstating the expired Superfund taxes would be unfair. Prior to their expiration, the petroleum industry paid \$7.5 billion, or 57 percent of the taxes even though its share of the liability was less than 10 percent, according to the EPA. Moreover, reinstating the Superfund taxes could result in higher energy costs to hard-working Americans who already struggle to make ends meet.

Reinstating Superfund taxes will not speed-up the program's cleanup activity. Revenues from Superfund taxes do not go directly to the EPA. Rather, the level of expenditures from the Superfund trust fund are appropriated annually by Congress regardless of whether taxes are reinstated.



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