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New report: Uncle Sam is nation's most damaging environmental villain

WASHINGTON, DC — Who's the worst polluter in the United States? The federal government, a new investigative report charges: It has a sordid history of leaking radioactive waste into drinking water, dumping sewage into national parks, spewing jet fuel into the ocean, and pouring PCBs into rivers.

In fact, federal agencies have contaminated at least 61,155 sites around the USA, produce more toxic waste annually than the nation's five largest chemical companies, and have polluted 475 billion gallons of ground water, the Libertarian Party noted today.

"There is no doubt: The federal government is the greatest environmental villain in the nation," said Steve Dasbach, the party's national director. "When it comes to polluting the land and water, the federal government is an environmentalist's worst nightmare."

According to a major, four-part investigative report in the *Boston Globe*, the estimated cost of cleaning up the damage done by federal agencies and the military could pass \$300 billion. That's five times the cost of environmental harm done by all private businesses.

Even more chilling, many federal agencies are exempt from environmental laws such as the Clean Water Act, and individual bureaucrats are immune from criminal prosecution. As a result, the *Globe* noted, the federal government "has a license to pollute." For example:

■ The **Environmental Protection Agency's** laboratories in Lexington, Massachusetts were discovered leaking mercury into ground water.

■ In **Yellowstone National Park**, "tens of thousands of gallons of raw sewage" have been dumped into pristine lakes and streams. Although this would be a crime if committed by a private company, the Park Service is exempt from the Clean Water Act.

■ In Washington's Puget Sound, the **U.S. Navy's** aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk dumped 6,000 gallons of jet fuel into the water.

■ The **Department of Defense** generates 750,000 tons of hazardous waste annually — which is more than the country's five largest chemical companies.

■ The **Department of Energy** has polluted 475 billion gallons of ground water, thanks to years of missile and bomb production.

■ The cost of cleaning up the **federal government's** 61,155 toxic sites is estimated at \$300 billion — compared to an estimated cost of only \$57 billion to clean up all the pollution caused by chemical and oil companies.

"It's the biggest, dirtiest secret in the environmental movement," said Dasbach. "The federal government — which people naively expect to protect us from environmental hazards — is actually putting Americans at risk. That's the *real* environmental tragedy."