oxic waste cleanup will be slow

Sporting a maize-colored tie and a "Mister Clean" smile, William D. Ruckelshaus, head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, breezed into southeastern Michigan this week with a mes-

into southeastern Michigan unb week a minima sage:

The United States is dealing with problems of the environment in an orderly and forthright manner—be patient.

"We are in the very early stages as a country in deciding what to do about hazardous waste," Ruckelshaus told a conference in Southgate Monday on "Alternatives to Landillis."

"Society has paid very little attention to dealing with hazardous waste from literally the dawn of industrial elvilization," Ruckelshaus said in an appraisal of where the nation stands in solving waste problems.

problems.

PROGRESS HAS been achieved, the EPA chief said, in the area of non-toric soild waste disposal. When the Indiana-born lawyer first headed EPA 10 years ago under President Nixon, programs on soild waste were all focused at the national level. Since then, the federal government has pulled back from direct involvement in the decision-making process.

process.

"What can be done about solid waste is often a local question," said Ruckelshaus. "The choices have to be tailored to problems that exist at a local fund."

The EPA chief admitted that after a decade ab-

The EPA chlef admitted that after a decade ab-sence, he is struck by the toughness of controlling hazardous waste. "It's difficult to arrive at a judg-ment of precisely wain ought to be done," he said. Ruckelshaus was a vice president for law and corporate affairs for Weyerhaueser Co., Tacoma, Wash, a paper manufacturer, until last year. He wash, a paper manufacturer, until last year. He Russell and the said of the said of the said Russell and the said of the said of the said and during a flap over the so-called EPA "Supertund."

LOCAL REACTIONS to his speech were positive Wayne County Planning Commissioner Maurice

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Roach of Plymouth said he boped the Rucketshaus visit would underline the Importance of the processed Wayne County Solid Waste Management Plan, currently receiving public review. "Rucketshaus said said things (about waste disposal) that needed to be said." Roach added. Pem Freed, Gresse In and president of Concern Detroit Inc., conference sponsor, hoped the "recycled" EPA head would spart more public interest in waste disposal than his predecessor, the "Ice Queen."

Queen."

CURRENTLY, Ruckelshaus said, EPA uses two
main tools for grappling with hazardous waste
problems:

.ems: The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).
The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act — alias "Super-

Compensation and Liability Act — alias "Super-fund."

He said EPA is in the early stages of implement-ing RCRA that pertain to hazardous waste use.
While the agency has yet to define hazardous waste as opposed to other wastes, attempts are being made to monitor dangerous substances.

A nationwide "cradie to grave" tracking system is moving into place to monitor the movement of hazardous wastes from production to disposal, but Rucketshaus cautioned, "It isn't going to happen overnight."

PROGRESS IN implementing Superfund is equally slow, Ruckelshaus said.

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With \$1.6 billion, Superfund gives the EPA authority to handle cleanup of oid and abandoned waste sites that pose a public be bath threat. He closed on a note of optimism: "We discovered these problems late, but we have now unpectionably made the commitment to deal with hazardous waste, and we have the government programs in place to deal with them."

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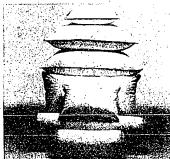
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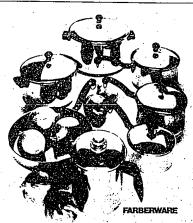
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