5. POLICY POSITION

FEDERAL EXCISE TAXES

BACKGROUND

Several recognized studies attest that consumer excise taxes place a disproportionate and unfair burden on the least affluent families. A study by The Council of State Governments clearly shows that imposing additional consumer excise taxes will result in significant loss of revenue to state and local governments.

Further, the jobs derived from the tobacco industry are pivotal to the economies of most southern states already threatened by significant job losses from proposed Department of Defense base closing, and any increases in federal tobacco taxes will reduce the stability of the states tobacco revenues that are used to fund a variety of important programs; add to significant unemployment increases; and creates unfair trade advantages to foreign competitors.

RECOMMENDATION

The Southern Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments strongly opposes any increase in the current federal tax on tobacco, and urges the President and Congress to seek other means of identifying a fair and broad based method of funding programs necessary for our national well being.

Adopted by the Southern Legislative Conference, July 13, 1993. Sponsored by Senator Robert H. "Rob" Smith, Mississippi, Representative Henry Reaves, Georgia and Representative Adrian Arnold, Kentucky

SO-93-PP20
Federal facilities should be required to proceed with federally-mandated water pollution control programs on comparable schedules with industries and local governments. Additional waivers, exemptions or delays should not be authorized for federal facilities.

The SLC supports the goal of the Clean Water Act to eliminate toxic pollutants. Congress should work in conjunction with the states on specific controls, in addition to BAT for toxic discharges. New requirements should be developed in cooperation with the states to include additional permit conditions and biologically-based toxicity assessment techniques, and adequately protect both the environment and public health.

The NPDES permit program should be modified to provide for the issuance, on a case-by-case basis, of up to ten-year permits where industries have good environment records and where it is clearly demonstrated that the environment is being protected. The NPDES permit program should also be improved by allowing states to assume partial authority pursuant to a mutual agreement between U.S. EPA and each state.