The Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Amendments Act: An Overview

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INTRODUCTION

If nuclear power was once the goose that laid the golden egg, nuclear waste is now an egg that nobody wants to hatch. Hospitals, universities, and manufacturers, as well as nuclear power plants, annually produce vast quantities of waste contaminated with varying levels of radioactivity. For years the generators of this waste simply burned their refuse, dumped it in streams, or stored it in underground trenches or metal drums. The Atomic Energy Act of 1946 allowed private industry to participate in developing atomic energy for peaceful purposes but did not regulate the disposal of civilian nuclear wastes. This failure had a significant impact, as such waste is dangerous for a period longer than most human institutions themselves endure. Legislative attempts to compel safe disposal of waste illustrate the dilemmas of federalism which must be resolved to ensure that safe disposal becomes a reality. Congress's first attempt, the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Act ("LLRWPA" or "Original Act") of 1980, enabled states to exercise some control

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4. The ecology, soil chemistry, hydrology, geology, climate, and meteorology of sites in which to bury low-level radioactive waste must be evaluated for at least a 500-year period. Such a long time span is necessary because it is only after 500 years that the remaining radioactivity no longer poses "an unacceptable hazard to an intruder or public health and safety." 10 C.F.R. § 61.7(b)(5) (1991).
5. Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Act of 1980, Pub. L. No. 96-573, 94 Stat. 3347, 3348 (repealed 1986). Low-level radioactive waste consists of "material which has been contaminated by radioactive elements or radionuclides. Low-level radioactive waste is often defined by what it is not. It is not spent reactor fuel, wastes from reprocessed reactor fuel, uranium mine and mill
over the disposal of low-level nuclear waste. The LLRWPA authorized states to form regional compacts to choose sites for and license regional disposal facilities. In 1986, Congress amended the LLRWPA, enacting the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Amendments Act ("LLRWPA Amendments Act" or "Amendments"). The LLRWPA Amendments Act supplemented the 1980 Act by providing additional deadlines and monetary incentives for compliance. Nine regional compacts have subsequently been formed under the auspices of the Act and its Amendments. Each compact has made some progress toward selecting a host state and some host states have started the lengthy and emotionally-charged process of site selection.

The impetus for such progress was interrupted, however, as states waited for the outcome of New York's constitutional challenge to the Amendments in the Supreme Court. New York, which had opted not to join a compact, challenged the constitutionality of the 1985 Amendments on the grounds that the incentives it provided violated the Tenth and Eleventh Amendments, as well as several other Constitutional provisions. But while New York's challenge succeeded with regard to one provision, the remainder of the Act was upheld and remains in force.

This paper, answering questions raised in an earlier article, first sets out the events and policies that led to the enactment of the federal law and amendments that authorize state-organized regional tailings or items contaminated with specified levels of transuranic elements." H.R. REP. NO. 314, 99th Cong., 1st Sess., pt. 2, at 15 (1985). Congress has yet to develop a workable solution to the problem presented by disposal of high-level nuclear wastes, those generated in the reprocessing of nuclear fuel, and others so classified by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. See 42 U.S.C. § 10101(12) (1988); 10 C.F.R. § 61.2 (1993).


8. Id. § 2021e.


10. Since a low-level radioactive waste disposal facility's life expectancy is between 20 to 50 years, a new facility should be developed while the old one is operating. Most compacts require that a member state which has not yet served as a host state develop the new site. See U.S. DEP'T OF ENERGY, OFFICE OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, PERSPECTIVES: LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT 2 (1989).


12. Id.; see also infra notes 184-92 and accompanying text (discussing New York's challenge to the statute).


radioactive waste disposal. After analyzing what the amended statute requires, it examines the states' progress in forming and siting compacts. This article also considers the effects of state challenges to the Act and its Amendments. Finally, the conclusion notes problem areas that should be addressed with regard to nuclear waste disposal.

I. EVENTS AND POLICIES LEADING TO ENACTMENT OF THE LLRWPA AND THE LLRPAA

The Atomic Energy Act of 1946 was passed so soon after the end of World War II that atomic energy was "popularly associated only with the atom bomb . . . ." The role of private industry in developing atomic power was very restricted, as "the manufacture and use of atomic materials [was] a Government monopoly." The Atomic Energy Act of 1954 ("AEA") advocated a broader role for private industry, fostering a partnership between the private sector and the government to develop peaceful uses for atomic energy "to the maximum extent consistent with the common defense and security and with the health and safety of the public . . . ."

The AEA, however, does not explicitly provide for the disposal of radioactive waste. Rather, the AEA generally states that nuclear facilities and materials should be regulated to protect the health and safety of the public. While states have traditionally enacted protective legislation in the areas of health, safety, and public welfare pursuant to their police power, states can regulate only those areas that are not preempted by federal legislation. States may, for example, regulate railroads and highways, and they may also award public utility franchises. With narrow restrictions, a few states

16. Id. at 3458.
18. Id. § 2013(d).
19. Id. § 2012(e).
21. See, e.g., South Carolina State Highway Dept. v. Barnwell Bros., Inc., 303 U.S. 177 (1938) (allowing states to regulate the weight and width of vehicles that use their roads and railroads as long as the regulations are intended to promote public safety objectives and not to benefit local economic interests).
may even regulate certain safety aspects of nuclear power. Section 274 of the AEA gives limited regulatory power to those states and authorizes the Atomic Energy Commission ("AEC") — and its successor, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission ("NRC")\(^2\) — to enter into agreements with the individual states.\(^2\) It also permits these so-called "agreement states" to assume authority to license and regulate (1) byproduct material,\(^2\) (2) source material,\(^2\) and (3) small quantities of special nuclear material.\(^2\) Under this program, states may regulate those AEA licensees within their borders that use byproduct, source, and special nuclear material. The agreement states may also agree to be responsible for regulating some radiological safety hazards.\(^2\)

States first began trying to regulate the safety of nuclear power

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(1) any radioactive material (except special nuclear material) yielded in or made radioactive by exposure to the radiation incident to the process of producing or utilizing special nuclear material, and (2) the tailings or wastes produced by the extraction or concentration of uranium or thorium from any ore processed primarily for its source material content.

Id. § 2014(e).

26. "Source material" is defined as:

(1) uranium, thorium, or any other material which is determined by the Commission pursuant to the provisions of section 2091 of this title to be source material; or (2) ores containing one or more of the foregoing materials, in such concentration as the Commission may by regulation determine from time to time.

Id. § 2014(z).

27. "Special nuclear material" is defined as:

(1) plutonium, uranium enriched in the isotope 233 or in the isotope 235, and any other material which the Commission, pursuant to the provisions of section 2071 of this title, determines to be special nuclear material, but does not include source material; or (2) any material artificially enriched by any of the foregoing, but does not include source material.

Id. § 2014(aa).

28. Id. § 2021b.
plants during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Until 1983, however, case law held that the tone of the statute and its legislative history evidenced Congress's implied preemption of state regulation of nuclear plants. In Northern States Power Company v. Minnesota, Northern had received a state operating permit requiring it to regulate radioactive discharges using more stringent criteria than those provided by the AEA. Northern filed suit, alleging that federal regulations under the AEA preempted Minnesota's authority to regulate discharges from power plants. The United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit agreed, concluding that state regulation of nuclear power could conflict with Congress's intention that the AEA encourage the rapid growth of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. In a similar setback for state regulation, the Seventh Circuit in 1982 held that the NRC has exclusive authority to regulate radiation hazards. Finally, that same year the Ninth Circuit held that the federal government had reserved for itself the safety regulation of nuclear power.

Unlike states such as Minnesota, Illinois, and Washington, California successfully navigated the preemption waters by passing laws


30. Northern States Power Co. v. Minnesota, 447 F.2d 1143, 1149-53 (8th Cir. 1971), aff’d mem., 405 U.S. 1035 (1972). The Supreme Court's affirmance of Northern States would seem to suggest that other state laws attempting to regulate the safety of nuclear power plants would be struck down. But see infra note 34 and accompanying text (discussing Congress's response to the Northern States decision).

32. Id. at 1145.
33. Id.
36. Washington State Bldg. & Constr. Trades Council v. Spellman, 684 F.2d 627 (9th Cir. 1982) (striking down a voter-approved initiative that would have prohibited the state from either receiving or storing radioactive waste produced outside the state). The Court of Appeals concluded that Washington's use of its police power to protect the health and safety of its citizens contravened the federal government's power to regulate the safety of nuclear power reserved to it by the AEA. Id. at 630-32.
addressing economic rather than safety concerns. California’s nuclear laws took advantage of the fact that, while the federal government ensures the safety of nuclear power, the states generate and sell electricity. Under California law, new reactors cannot be certified by the state until a technology to dispose of high-level nuclear waste is both identified and approved by the federal government.

In Pacific Gas & Electric Co. v. State Energy Resources Conservation & Development Commission, a utility, Pacific Gas & Electric Company (“PG&E”), sought a declaratory judgment that federal regulation of nuclear power preempted California’s laws. The district court held in favor of PG&E, but on appeal the Ninth Circuit rejected PG&E’s argument that Northern States was controlling. The Court of Appeals upheld the California laws because it found California was exercising its traditional police power by basing the laws on economic factors. On final appeal, the Supreme Court held that California’s laws were motivated by economic rather than safety concerns and that the state law therefore did not conflict with the federal purpose of developing nuclear energy as expressed in the AEA. This suggests that as long as states regulate the economic rather than the safety aspects of nuclear power, state laws will not conflict with the goals of the AEA.

37. Pacific Gas & Elec. Co. v. State Energy Resources Conservation & Dev. Comm’n, 461 U.S. 190, 205 (1983). In holding that § 25524.2 of the California Public Resources Code was not preempted by the Atomic Energy Act, the Court stated:

   Congress, in passing the 1954 [Atomic Energy] Act . . . intended that the Federal Government should regulate the radiological safety aspects involved in the construction and operation of a nuclear plant, but that the States retain their traditional responsibility in the field of regulating electrical utilities for determining questions of need, reliability, cost, and other related state concerns.


44. Pacific Legal Found., 659 F.2d at 923-25.

At the federal level, problems at disposal sites in the 1970s forced Congress to rethink the issue of safety regulation in the area of nuclear waste disposal. From 1962 to 1971, the AEC licensed six commercial regional disposal sites for low-level radioactive wastes. By 1978, however, three of the sites were closed due to groundwater pooling in the trenches used to bury the waste. Moreover, improper waste packaging and transportation caused Washington and Nevada to temporarily close the sites located in their states in 1979. That same year, Governor Richard Riley of South Carolina announced that the Barnwell site would reduce by half the volume of waste it was accepting no later than October 31, 1981.

Rather than passing a law dealing with waste disposal, however, Congress, "at the states' request, and in the interest of federalism, deferred action to allow the formulation of state-based and state-created proposals." The states wanted a state-created plan for various reasons. The three states with existing disposal facilities worried that a plan created without their input could force their sites to become permanent repositories. There is also some indication that other states were dissatisfied with management at existing federal sites. In addition, all the states wanted to be able to choose disposal sites, rather than have them imposed by the federal govern-


47. The site at West Valley, New York was closed in 1975. In 1977, the site at Maxey Flats, Kentucky stopped operating and the site at Sheffield, Illinois shut down in 1978. Id. at 16, 36.


51. MIDWEST INTERSTATE LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE COMPACT COMM’N, FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL AND THE MIDWEST COMPACT COMMISSION, Question 1.6 (1992) [hereinafter FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS].

52. Id. Congress specifically intended that the states would not have responsibility for disposing of waste generated or owned by the U.S. Department of Energy. Such waste, in addition to that generated by government research on atomic weapons, is disposed of at federal disposal facilities operated by the Department of Energy. Id. at Question 1.2; see also supra notes 25-28 and accompanying text (describing waste material that the states may regulate under strict limitations).
The National Governors' Association ("NGA") appointed a task force which recommended that each state be responsible for the disposal of non-federally produced low-level wastes generated within its borders. The task force also recommended that the states be allowed to form interstate compacts for waste disposal and that these compacts be able to restrict waste disposal only to waste that was generated within the compact regions. Congress incorporated the task force's suggestions when it enacted the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Act in 1980, adding the requirement that Congress give its consent before a compact could be formed and establishing January 1, 1986, as the date after which compacts could refuse to accept waste generated outside the region.

But the LLRWPA lacked effective incentives to induce states to comply with its provisions. Under the original Act, the Beatty, Richland, and Barnwell sites were able to refuse access to their dumps after January 1, 1986 if they became part of a regional compact by that time. However, even if they became compact members within that time frame, they were still able to accept out-of-region waste and levy surcharges on the recalcitrant states that had shipped such waste. Thus the only motivation for a state to seek out membership in a compact was the fear of paying a surcharge at some later date. For most states, however, this fear paled beside the daunting likelihood of becoming their region's host state and having to establish a low-level waste depository within its borders.

After threats of closure from the operators of the three existing sites, the NGA negotiated a new "transition package" with the three depository states that was enacted into law as the LLRWPAA of 1985. The Amendments' new deadline is January 1, 1996, a deadline the Amendments' framers believed states would be more likely to meet since the LLRWPAA sets out periodic mile-

54. New York, 942 F.2d at 117.
55. Id. at 116.
58. See supra note 46 (listing the six sites the AEC licensed between 1962 and 1971).
stones for developing disposal sites and imposes surcharges on non-complying states.

II. WHAT THE STATUTE REQUIRES

A. Forming Compacts

The Act and its Amendments establish requirements that affect states forming compacts, as well as those choosing to remain independent. Perhaps most important is the requirement that a compact be composed of at least two states. Only a compact, not an individual state, may exclude from its dump waste produced outside the region. This provision was upheld on appeal in Washington State Building & Construction Trades Council v. Spellman, the only case specifically construing the LLRWPA of 1980. In Spellman, the Ninth Circuit found that the state of Washington could not legally exclude out-of-state waste from its dumpsite because it had not yet formed an interstate compact. Both the operators of the dumpsite at Richland, Washington and the United States challenged the constitutionality of the state's initiative prohibiting the "transportation and storage within Washington of radioactive waste produced outside the state."

The Richland site, one of three commercial low-level radioactive waste dumps still operating in the United States, is located on a section of the Hanford Reservation that Washington leases from the federal government and subleases to the operator. In Spellman, the plaintiffs argued that the initiative violated the Commerce Clause of the Constitution and that state authority to regulate nuclear waste disposal was preempted by the AEA and the LLRWPA. The Federal District Court for the Eastern District of Washington agreed and the Ninth Circuit affirmed. The circuit

61. Id. § 2021b(4).
62. Id. § 2021e(a)(3)(B).
64. Id. at 630.
65. Id.
66. Id.
67. Id.
68. Id.
70. Spellman, 684 F.2d at 632.
court's decision reflected traditional preemption and Commerce Clause analysis. In deciding against Washington on the preemption issue, the court found that the state's purpose in passing the initiative had been to use its police power to protect the health and safety of its citizens, a job the AEA reserves for the federal government.\(^7\)

On the Commerce Clause question, the court found that the initiative failed all three parts of the test usually applied to state statutes that attempt to regulate the flow of interstate commerce.\(^7\)

First, the initiative banned only out-of-state waste and thus failed to regulate in an evenhanded manner.\(^7\)

Second, the law failed to show how waste produced in Washington was in any way safer than out-of-state waste, and thus it did not fulfill a legitimate local purpose.\(^7\)

Third, the initiative failed to meet the requirement that it have only an incidental effect on interstate commerce, as the Richland site was receiving approximately 40 percent of the country's low-level waste.\(^7\)

The court found that if Washington had joined a compact, the compact could have eventually excluded producers of out-of-region wastes from gaining access to the compact's dump.\(^7\)

A noncompact state could not do this, however.\(^7\) As the district court noted, only a "compact may preclude disposal of extra-regional waste in the compact's regional sites."\(^7\)

The requirement that a compact be composed of at least two states has important implications for states choosing not to join a compact. States that decide to "go it alone" must dispose of the waste generated within their borders either by opening their own dump or by arranging to ship waste to a dump located in another state or compact.\(^7\)

However, in order to comply with the statute, a state choosing to ship waste outside its boundaries must certify that the "stand-alone" state "will be capable of providing for, and will provide for, the storage, disposal, or management of any low-level waste."\(^7\)

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\(^7\) Id. at 631.

\(^7\) Id. at 630.

\(^7\) Spellman, 684 F.2d at 631.

\(^7\) Spellman, 518 F. Supp. at 932.

\(^7\) Id. at 933.
radioactive waste generated within such State and requiring disposal after December 31, 1992 . . . ."  
Presumably, this means a state can satisfy this requirement by showing that it has contracted with other states or compacts for the ongoing disposal of its waste. Of course, the stand-alone state can decide to open its own dump, but if it does it may not exclude waste from any out-of-state generator. The authority of a compact to exclude waste generated outside its region is therefore a state's main incentive for joining a compact. Thus, opening a dump in a stand-alone state is fraught with risk. Other states attempting to comply with the statute's directives to arrange to dispose of their wastes may seek to do so in the dump of an unaffiliated state, and that unaffiliated state has no authority to deny access to that out-of-state waste.

B. More Carrots and Sticks

In addition to the requirement that a compact be composed of at least two states, the second major requirement of the LLRWPA is that non-sited states and compacts must have met the statute's milestones and deadlines and achieved operational disposal facilities by January 1, 1993. To encourage non-sited states to meet the milestones, the Amendments contain both incentives and penalties. The operation of these incentives, surcharges, and penalty surcharges is detailed in the statute's two interlocking time frames.

These time frames provide that sited states may levy surcharges on waste generators in addition to the customary disposal fees the generators paid for waste generated in non-sited states through 1992. One quarter of this surcharge was kept in an escrow account, to be returned to the non-sited states upon compliance with the milestones. The sited states kept the other three quarters of the surcharge. If a non-sited state did not comply, the potential rebate reverted to the sited state. An additional penalty surcharge was levied on the

81. Id. § 2021c.
82. Id. § 2021(a)(1)(C).
83. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(C).
84. The requirements of both time frames are set out in 42 U.S.C. § 2021e(a)-(g) (1988). It is necessary to read each section in conjunction with the other in order to understand how the two time frames interlock.
85. Id. § 2021e(d)(1).
86. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(A)-(B).
87. Id.
88. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(F).
waste disposed of by generators from a non-sited state. Presumably, these generators would pressure their state legislators to follow the Act's requirements.

The first statutory time frame — the "access" time frame — runs from January 1, 1986 through January 1, 1996. It initially established a seven-year period — which began on January 1, 1986 and ended on December 31, 1992 — during which the three states with operating regional disposal facilities had to make disposal capacity available for low-level waste generated by non-sited compacts and non-compact member states. At the end of this seven-year period, the three states with existing regional waste dumps were no longer required to accept out-of-region waste.

Even before this deadline, however, non-sited compacts and states that did not belong to a compact could avail themselves of the disposal capacity of the three existing sites during the seven-year period by satisfying a set of requirements detailed in a second time frame, the "milestone" time frame. This second time frame extended from January 15, 1986 to January 1, 1992 and therefore ran almost concurrently with the first seven years of the "access" time frame. If a state did not comply with these milestones in a timely manner, it still had access to the three waste dumps through the end of the seven-year period provided under the "access" time frame, after which the state became subject to surcharges and milestone incentives. States that did not join a compact or develop independent siting plans by the end of the first seven years of the "access" time frame continue to be governed by that time frame, which runs through January 1, 1996. Since 1992, these states — still governed by the "access" time frame — have faced increasingly severe penalties, including the requirement that they have to take title to the

89. Id. § 2021e(e)(2)(A)-(C).
90. Id. §§ 2021e(a)(1), 2021e(d)(2)(C).
91. Id. § 2021e(a)(1).
92. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(A).
93. Id. § 2021e(e).
94. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(B)(i).
95. Id. § 2021e(e)(2)(D).
96. Id. § 2021e(d)(1).
97. Id. § 2021e(d)(2). Milestone incentives include the 25 percent surcharge fee paid by the waste generator to the sited state that was held in escrow until the waste generator's state complied with the LLRWPA. Once the state complied with the statute, the money was paid either to the state or the state's compact commission. See infra notes 100-29 and accompanying text (discussing the provisions and incentives contained in each time frame).
waste generated within their borders.\footnote{Id.} To show how the time frames interlock, their provisions are presented below in chronological order.

1. 1986

Under the “milestone” time frame, by July 1, 1986, each state was required to have either passed legislation showing an intention to enter into a compact or provided certification of its intent to develop a disposal facility within the state.\footnote{Id. § 2021e(e)(1)(A). For a discussion of the amount of waste produced in a year, see FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, supra note 51, at Question 6.} Under the “access” time frame, a state disposing of waste not generated in one of the three sited compact regions could have been charged a surcharge of up to ten dollars per cubic foot in 1986.\footnote{42 U.S.C. § 2021e(d)(1)(A) (1988).} Twenty-five percent of this surcharge was then deposited in an escrow account.\footnote{Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(A).} If a state met the first milestone, on July 1, 1986 it received a rebate of 25 percent of the funds that were held in the escrow account.\footnote{Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(B)(i). Rebates were to be paid within 30 days of July 1, 1986. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(D).} If a state failed to meet the first milestone, generators of low-level waste within the state were charged two times the applicable surcharge for the period beginning July 1, 1986 and ending December 31, 1986.\footnote{Id. § 2021e(e)(2)(A)(i).}

2. 1987

Under the “access” time frame, a waste generator disposing of its waste in one of the existing sited compact regions could have been charged a surcharge not to exceed ten dollars per cubic foot in 1987 for waste not generated in the compact region.\footnote{Id. § 2021e(d)(1)(A).}

3. 1988

Under the “milestone” time frame, each non-sited compact region was required either to have identified the state where the waste disposal facility would be located or chosen a developer for the facility and the site to be developed by 1988.\footnote{Id. § 2021e(e)(1)(B).} Either the compact region or the state in which the facility was to be located was also required
to have developed a siting plan.\textsuperscript{107}

Under the "access" time frame, if a state did not comply, the surcharge for 1988 disposal of waste generated outside the region was not to exceed $20 per cubic foot.\textsuperscript{108} Upon compliance with the milestone, 25 percent of the surcharge originally paid by the waste-generating state and deposited in escrow was rebated to that state or to the compact commission serving that state.\textsuperscript{109} If the milestone was not accomplished by January 1, 1988, the penalty for failure to comply was that any generator in the region or state was charged two times the applicable surcharge\textsuperscript{110} for the period from January 1, 1988 through June 30, 1988, and was charged four times the surcharge for the period July 1, 1988 through December 31, 1988.\textsuperscript{111}

4. 1989

Under the "milestone" time frame, a non-sited compact region that did not meet the milestone of identifying the state where the facility would be located could, on or after January 1, 1989, be denied its access to the regional disposal facilities.\textsuperscript{112} Under the "access" time frame, the out-of-region disposal surcharge was not to exceed $20 per cubic foot.\textsuperscript{113}

5. 1990

Under the "milestone" time frame, all non-sited compact regions or non-member states were required to have filed an application for a license to operate a waste dump by 1990.\textsuperscript{114} A non-member state, however, could have provided a written certification to the NRC that the state would be capable of providing for storage, disposal, or management of any low-level waste generated within the state and requiring disposal after December 31, 1992.\textsuperscript{115} The penalty for fail-

\textsuperscript{107} Id. § 2021e(e)(1)(B)(i). The siting plan was to provide "detailed procedures and a schedule for establishing a facility location and preparing a facility license application . . . ." Id.

108. Id. § 2021e(d)(1)(B).

109. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(B)(ii). Rebates were to be paid within 30 days of January 1, 1988. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(D).

110. Id. § 2021e(e)(2)(B)(i)(I).

111. Id. § 2021e(e)(2)(B)(i)(II).

112. Id. § 2021e(e)(2)(B)(ii).

113. Id. § 2021e(d)(1)(B).

114. Id. § 2021e(e)(1)(C)(i).

115. Id. § 2021e(e)(1)(C)(ii).
ure to comply was that the waste generated within the state or non-sited compact region might not have been accepted by existing disposal facilities. Under the "access" time frame, if a state did not comply, the surcharge for 1990 disposal of out-of-region waste was not to exceed $40 per cubic foot. Once again, if a state did comply with the milestone, 25 percent of the surcharge originally paid by the waste-generating state and deposited in escrow for the period January 1, 1988 through December 31, 1989, was rebated to that state or to the compact commission serving that state.

6. 1991

Under the "access" time frame, the surcharge for out-of-region disposal was not to exceed $40 per cubic foot.

7. 1992

Under the "milestone" time frame, a complete application for a license to operate a waste disposal facility within each non-sited compact region or non-member state should have been filed. Also, if a non-sited compact region or non-member state failed to comply with the milestone, any waste generator within the region or state was charged three times the applicable surcharge for the period beginning June 1, 1992 and ending on the filing of the application.

Under the "access" time frame, the surcharge for waste disposal was not to exceed $40 per cubic foot. Further, under this time frame the 25 percent held in escrow between January 1, 1990 and December 31, 1992 was to be paid to the waste-generating state, or the compact commission serving such state, if the compact region or state of the waste's origin could provide for disposal of all the waste generated within the region or state by January 1, 1993.

116. Id. § 2021e(e)(2)(C).
117. Id. § 2021e(d)(1)(C).
118. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(B)(iii). Rebates were to be paid within 30 days of January 1, 1990. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(D).
119. Id. § 2021e(d)(1)(C).
120. Id. § 2021e(e)(1)(D).
121. Id. § 2021e(e)(2)(D).
122. Id. § 2021e(d)(1)(C). Therefore, since the "milestone" time frame provided for a penalty in the amount of three times the maximum applicable surcharge under the "access" time frame ($40), the maximum penalty for this time period was $160 per foot ($40 + $40).
123. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(B)(iv).
8. 1993

Under the "access" time frame, if a compact region or non-member state failed to provide for disposal of all its low-level waste by January 1, 1993, it faced two alternatives. The first alternative was that at the request of the generator or owner, each state in which low-level waste was generated would be required to take title to and possession of the waste. If the state failed to take possession as soon after January 1, 1993 as the generator or owner notified the state that the waste could be shipped, then the state was liable for damages incurred by the generator or owner flowing from the state's failure. The second alternative was that if a state or region elected not to take title and possession, 25 percent of any amount collected during the period January 1, 1990 to December 31, 1992 would be repaid, with interest, to each generator from whom the surcharge was collected.

9. 1996

Finally, if a state or region in which low-level waste is generated is unable to provide for the disposal of all such waste by January 1, 1996, that state shall, at the request of the generator or owner of the waste, not only take title to the waste, but also be obligated to take possession of the waste. Again, the state shall be liable for all damages to the generator or owner caused by the state's failure to take possession.

III. THE STATES' PROGRESS IN FORMING AND SITING COMPACTS

The LLRWPAA dictates that "[e]ach State shall be responsible for providing, either by itself or in cooperation with other States, for the disposal of . . . low-level radioactive waste generated within the State . . . ." To carry out this goal, federal policy espouses regional disposal, with states entering into "such compacts as may be

124. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(C).
125. Id.
126. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(C)(i).
127. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(C)(ii). As a result, the 25 percent rebate was an incentive for states to take possession of the waste.
128. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(C).
129. Id. § 2021e(d)(2)(C)(ii). The state is only liable from the first point in 1996 at which the owner or generator notifies the state that the waste is available for shipment. Id.
130. Id. § 2021c(a)(1).
necessary to provide for the establishment and operation of regional disposal facilities for low-level radioactive waste."

A. Formation of Compacts

1. Options

In enacting the amendments, Congress assumed that the states would align themselves regionally into six or eight compacts. As previously mentioned, Congress requires that a compact region be comprised of at least two states; thus, the ability of a compact to exclude out-of-region waste is one of the incentives for each state to join a compact. Each state has two options: (1) join a compact and participate in the decision as to which state will become the region's host site, with the concomitant ability to exclude waste generated outside the compact region; or (2) remain independent, in which case it must either (a) make disposal capacity available to its generators within the state at a site which it will not be able to close to out-of-state generators or (b) make arrangements to ship its waste to another state or compact (and pay a surcharge for the privilege).

2. Incentives

The surcharges, penalties, and take-title provisions seem to be effective incentives. The great weakness of the original Act was the absence of sufficiently powerful incentives to ensure compliance with the statute's goals. By 1985, Congress had approved seven compacts. By 1992, after passage of the Amendments, Congress had ratified a total of nine compacts. While only two other compacts have been approved since the LLRWPA was passed, this number does not reflect the furious activity that has taken place within the existing compacts and among the unaligned states: Since the Amendments were passed, seven states have moved from one comp-

131. Id. § 2021d(a)(2).
pact to another\textsuperscript{137} and four unaligned states have joined new compacts.\textsuperscript{138}

The Amendments also resolved questions regarding who has ultimate authority over a compact.\textsuperscript{139} Not only must Congress ratify each compact,\textsuperscript{140} but the Amendments also require Congressional review of compacts every five years.\textsuperscript{141} The regulations also stipulate that Congress may dissolve a compact at any time if it breaks a state or federal law.\textsuperscript{142}

\textbf{B. Compacts Negotiated Before 1985}

Seven compacts\textsuperscript{143} were negotiated by 1985, and they were subse-

\textsuperscript{137} These states were Wyoming, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Arizona, and Utah.

\textsuperscript{138} South Dakota and California joined the Southwestern Compact, while Pennsylvania and West Virginia formed the Appalachian Compact. \textit{See} 42 U.S.C. \textsection{} 2021d notes (1988). However, one aligned state embarked on a course of conduct that would lead to its ouster from a compact; Michigan was kicked out of the Midwest Compact on July 14, 1991. \textit{See infra} notes 155-80 and accompanying text (describing the circumstances that led to Michigan's ouster).

\textsuperscript{139} Mostaghel, \textit{supra} note 14, at 87 ("Congress has given up its right to be the exclusive regulator in this case.").

\textsuperscript{140} 42 U.S.C. \textsection{} 2021d(c)(2) (1988). The statute provides that "[a]ny authority in a compact to restrict the use of the regional disposal facilities under the compact to the disposal of low-level radioactive waste generated within the compact region shall not take effect before . . . Congress by law consents to the compact." \textit{Id.} \textsection{} 2021d(c).

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Id.} \textsection{} 2021d(d). Such review was not required under the Original Act.

\textsuperscript{142} \textit{Id.} \textsection{} 2021d(b)(4)-(5).

\textsuperscript{143} These seven original compacts were:

1) The Northwest Interstate Compact on Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management: Potential members were Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming;

2) The Central Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact: Potential members were Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Oklahoma;

3) The Southeast Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Compact: Potential members were Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia;

4) The Central Midwest Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact: Potential members were Illinois and Kentucky;

5) The Midwest Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Compact: Potential members were Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin;

6) The Rocky Mountain Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact: Potential members were Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming; and

7) The Northeast Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Compact: Potential members were Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland.

quently approved under Title II of the LLRWPA, the Omnibus Low-Level Radioactive Waste Interstate Compact Consent Act ("Omnibus Compact Consent Act"). Passage of the Omnibus Compact Consent Act meant that the potential members of the seven ratified compacts had official compacts to join after completing the proper steps necessary to obtain state approval of membership. States and regions not designated as potential members of any compact at that time were California, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.145

C. Current Compacts, Host States, and Unaffiliated States

After much jockeying back and forth, the current compact configuration includes nine compacts, all of which have at least one host state. These present-day compacts closely resemble the compacts negotiated in 1985, but with some variations in membership.146

144. Id.


146. The current compact formations are as follows:

1) The Northwest Interstate Compact on Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management: Current members include Alaska, Idaho, Hawaii, Montana, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. Wyoming, originally a member, is now affiliated only with the Rocky Mountain Compact. The host state, as could be predicted, is Washington.

2) The Central Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact: Current members include Arkansas, Louisiana, Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. No longer included are Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and North Dakota. The host state is Nebraska.

3) The Southeast Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Compact: Current members include Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. The host state is currently South Carolina. The original configuration of this compact remains unchanged.

4) The Central Midwest Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact: Current members include Kentucky and the host state Illinois.

5) The Midwest Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Compact: Current members are Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Michigan is no longer a member of this compact, and Ohio is the host state.

6) The Rocky Mountain Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact: Current members are Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, and Wyoming, with Nevada serving as the host state. Initial potential members Arizona and Utah are no longer in this compact.

7) The Northeast Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Compact: The current and original members of this compact include Connecticut, Delaware,
Ten states or regions remain unaffiliated as of this writing. They are the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Texas, and Vermont. Of these ten, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico — each of which produces less than one percent of the nation’s low-level waste — have no plans to develop waste disposal repositories. The other states, with the possible exception of Michigan, are proceeding to select sites to comply with the milestones discussed above.

IV. CHALLENGES TO THE LLRWPA

Even with the Amendments’ incentives, some states are still reluctant to commit themselves to the concept of shared waste disposal. Michigan and New York took two different paths to avoid the statute’s ultimate strictures. Michigan joined a compact but then used every possible delay tactic, which included challenging the statute on constitutional grounds. Unlike Michigan, New York did not join a compact. And while New York did comply with the LLRWPA, it also challenged the statute in court. New York’s course of action resulted in the Supreme Court’s invalidation of one...
of the Amendments' key provisions. Although Michigan's conduct was more local in effect than that of New York, an examination of Michigan's behavior is useful because it exposes the weaknesses inherent in the LLRWPA that did not come up during New York's challenge to the statute.

A. Michigan and the Midwest Compact: Going No Place Fast

1. Formation of the Compact

The seven original members of the Midwest Compact — Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin — passed compact-enabling legislation in the early 1980s, and Congress ratified the compact in 1985. As is typical under such legislation, the compact is administered by a Compact Commission created by the member states. Each state appoints a Compact Commissioner according to individual state law and the Commission holds annual meetings that are open to the public. The compact cannot vote to add member states, nor can it accept out-of-region waste, unless the host states agree by affirmative vote. Member states may withdraw from the compact only if they repeal the enabling legislation. However, they may be ousted if the other member states find that they have failed to discharge their responsibilities either as a member state or as a host state. The Compact Commission selects a host state using criteria developed by its members, or a member state can volunteer to serve as the host state. A member state's responsibilities include paying fees as well as reviewing and commenting on the host state's site selection and disposal.
technology. The host state's primary responsibilities are to select a site, choose a disposal technology, and then make the site operational, all within the time frames set by the statute. 163

2. Michigan Draws the Short Straw

The Midwest Compact Commission formally designated four member states — Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin — as host states on February 27, 1987. 164 After the governors of these four states were notified of the designations, the designees entered a 90-day period within which they could have withdrawn from the compact without suffering any financial penalty. 165 None of the designated hosts exercised this option and, on June 30, 1987, the Compact Commission chose Michigan to site and build the compact's first regional dump. 166 The Commission considered various factors in selecting Michigan, including the volume of waste generated and the feasibility of transporting the waste. 167 Based on these same criteria, the Commission selected Ohio as the first alternate host state and Minnesota as the second alternate host state. 168

3. Not a Gracious Host

Michigan's lack of enthusiasm for developing a regional low-level nuclear waste disposal site became evident soon after its selection. In the fall of 1987, the same year Michigan was designated the first actual host, the Michigan legislature approved resolutions inviting Congress to review the disposal policies expressed in the Amendments and to declare a moratorium on siting facilities until the review was completed. 169 Throughout the next three years, Michigan took part in negotiations to set up agreements that would have provided the state with funds from the Commission to develop the site, with payback guaranteed by the Michigan utilities operating nu-

163. See supra note 155 and accompanying text (listing the legislation of each state authorizing the Midwest Compact).
164. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, supra note 51, at Question 3.1.
165. Id.
166. Id.
167. Id. at Question 3.2.
168. Id. at Question 3.1.
169. MIDWEST INTERSTATE LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE COMPACT COMMISSION, ACTIONS BY MICHIGAN SHOWING THAT IT HAS FAILED TO DISCHARGE ITS OBLIGATION AS HOST STATE FOR THE MIDWEST COMPACT'S FIRST REGIONAL DISPOSAL FACILITY I (1991) [hereinafter ACTIONS BY MICHIGAN].
clear power plants. The state's participation was so half-hearted that after negotiations concerning three separate agreements remained inconclusive, the utilities indicated to the Commission that "there was no reason for the utilities to proceed with negotiation of a Guaranty because they had no confidence in Michigan's siting program . . ." In 1987, the Michigan legislature passed "the most protective low-level radioactive waste containment facility site selection criteria in the nation." Then, in 1989, Michigan's governor, James Blanchard, threatened to introduce legislation withdrawing the state from the compact if member states did not join with Michigan in correcting flaws in the compact and seeking changes in federal laws. Despite these actions, however, the Compact Commission in 1989 circulated a draft of a joint Governors' Certificate in order to comply with the 1990 federal milestone. While the member states had four opportunities to review and revise drafts of the Certificate, all the compact's governors signed except Governor Blanchard.

Gubernatorial politics apparently made Michigan's status as a host state a "hot" issue. Governor Blanchard, seeking reelection in 1990, stated that "[o]ur goal is to keep a low-level radioactive waste dump out of Michigan." His opponent, John Engler, stated in an election debate that he "would continue as Governor to fight the location of this dump in Michigan because ultimately in the nation there will only be three or four dumps and its [sic] in our interest to make sure one of them isn't in Michigan."

Michigan's restrictive siting criteria ultimately led to the elimination of most of the candidate sites in Michigan. Eventually, the Michigan Senate passed a resolution requesting that the Midwest Compact relieve it of host status since it could not find a site.

170. Id. at 2-7.
171. Id. at 7.
173. Id. at 1-2.
174. Id. at 7-8. The Governors' certification was required to comply with the 1990 federal milestone for development of new disposal facilities. 42 U.S.C. 2021e(e)(1)(C)(ii) (1988).
175. ACTIONS BY MICHIGAN, supra note 169, at 7-8. Governor Blanchard did submit certification under separate cover, but it did not contain a projected operation date that was included in the document the other governors signed. Id.
176. Id. at 8 (quoting Governor Blanchard's press release of February 9, 1990).
177. Id. (quoting the gubernatorial election debate of October 6, 1990).
178. Id. at 13-18.
179. Id. at 12. The Senate passed the resolution on May 17, 1990, but no action was taken by
up with Michigan's stalling tactics, the Midwest Compact revoked Michigan's membership on July 24, 1991.180

4. What Can Be Learned From Michigan and the Midwest Compact?

Compacts may want to consider several factors that emerged as important during the four years Michigan remained a member of the Midwest Compact. First, Article VIII of the Midwest Compact provides for a 90-day period during which designated host states can withdraw from the compact.181 Ninety days, however, may be too short a time for a state to realistically ascertain whether or not it has suitable site areas available. On the other hand, Michigan's membership in the compact was not revoked until July 24, 1991, more than four years after it was designated the host state.182 Considering the relatively short overall time frame of the Amendments (under which states and compacts are to have disposal facilities in operation by 1996), allowing a potential host state four years to decide it does not want to remain in the compact is an indulgence the remaining member states can hardly afford.

Compacts might also want to consider the factors the Midwest Compact used in choosing the host states. The ranking of the states for purposes of determining host status was based mainly on waste generation, although transportation received some consideration as well.183 It might be useful for future compacts to give greater consideration to a state's geographical makeup because some areas are physically unsuitable for waste disposal and knowing how great a percentage of a state's terrain might be unsuitable could affect a state's ranking.

Finally, in the future, member states should be required to reveal their siting criteria at the outset. A compact might also want to establish an upper limit on the restrictiveness of these criteria prior to the selection of a host state.

180. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, supra note 51, at Question 2.1.
182. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, supra note 51, at Question 2.1.
183. Id. at Question 3.2.
B. New York's Constitutional Challenge: Striking at the Heart of the Amendments

Michigan was not alone in choosing to forego a nuclear waste compact. After breaking off compact negotiations with several northeastern states, New York decided not to join a compact but rather to develop its own waste disposal sites.\footnote{Michigan was not alone in choosing to forego a nuclear waste compact. After breaking off compact negotiations with several northeastern states, New York decided not to join a compact but rather to develop its own waste disposal sites.} Pursuant to the incentives built into the 1985 Amendments, New York selected two counties as possible low-level waste dump sites.\footnote{Pursuant to the incentives built into the 1985 Amendments, New York selected two counties as possible low-level waste dump sites.} However, in 1990 New York and the two counties filed suit in the United States District Court for the Northern District of New York against the United States, seeking a declaratory judgment that the LLRWPA’s three incentives\footnote{However, in 1990 New York and the two counties filed suit in the United States District Court for the Northern District of New York against the United States, seeking a declaratory judgment that the LLRWPA’s three incentives} violated the Tenth and Eleventh Amendments to the United States Constitution as well as the Guaranty and Due Process Clauses.\footnote{The District Court dismissed the complaint, and the Second Circuit affirmed that decision.} The District Court dismissed the complaint, and the Second Circuit affirmed that decision.\footnote{On certiorari, the Supreme Court held that the monetary and access incentives were constitutional but that the take-title provision “crossed the line distinguishing encouragement from coercion”; it either lay “outside Congress’ enumerated powers” or infringed “upon the core of state sovereignty reserved by the Tenth Amendment . . . .”} In laying the groundwork for the majority’s analysis of the stat-
ute, Justice Sandra Day O'Conner examined the difference between federal and state power. She claimed that since the states retain significant sovereign authority under the Tenth Amendment, when a Congressional action limits a particular aspect of state power the state power must be examined to see if it is protected by any Constitutional limits on Congressional power. The Court noted that the LLRWPA authorizes states with disposal sites to impose surcharges on wastes shipped to the sites from other states. If a state were to impose such surcharges unilaterally, its action might be considered a burden on interstate commerce under the Constitution's Commerce Clause. However, the Court found the LLRWPA's surcharge provisions to be a legitimate exercise of Congress’s ability to authorize states to place burdens on interstate commerce pursuant to the powers enumerated in the Commerce Clause. Similarly, collecting a percentage of the surcharge is a legitimate exercise of Congress's taxing power. And the third part of the first set of incentives — the requirement that the states meet the statute's milestones before they can get back some of the escrowed funds — is also well within Congress's authority under the Spending Clause. Since Congress possesses the authority to enforce the first set of incentives — the "monetary incentives" — its exercise of power is constitutionally legitimate; the resulting statutory incentives are not inconsistent with the Tenth Amendment and thus do not violate state sovereignty.

The Court also held that the second set of incentives — which provide that sited compacts may gradually increase access costs to their sites and may ultimately deny access to waste generated outside the region — fall within the preemption aspect of Congress's commerce power. Where Congress has enacted a regulatory

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193. The Tenth Amendment states: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." U.S. Const. amend. X.
195. Id. at 2425.
196. Id. at 2425-26.
197. Id. at 2425.
198. Id. at 2426.
199. Id.
200. Id.
201. Id.
202. Id. at 2427.
203. Id.
scheme governing private activity that conflicts with a state regulation, that state regulation will fail. However, only conflicting regulations will be preempted; earlier cases examining federal regulation of private activity “recognized the ability of Congress to offer states the choice of regulating that activity according to federal standards or having state law preempted by federal regulation.” The Court noted that a state may or may not choose to regulate nuclear waste disposal, but if it does choose to do so, it must follow federal standards. Following federal standards in this case means establishing self-sufficiency either by developing a local dump or by joining a regional compact. But if a state chooses not to regulate nuclear waste at all it will not be able to develop a waste dump, and waste-producing residents would therefore have to search outside the state for a disposal facility. That search would subject the individual waste producers, but not the state, to the federal scheme under which sited states and compacts operate. Therefore, since the second set of incentives, the “access incentives,” offer a true choice to states — that is, whether or not to regulate — the Court concluded that these incentives do not interfere with state sovereignty and are not inconsistent with the Tenth Amendment.

Justice O'Connor considered the third set of incentives to be fundamentally different from the first two. According to her analysis, the take-title provisions do not present the states with a true choice of whether or not to regulate. Rather, the states are presented with the choice of whether or not to accept ownership of and responsibility for the waste or to regulate according to the mandates of Congress.

The Court did not consider this a choice at all because Congress does not possess the power to impose either of the two separate alternatives. The Court noted that Congress cannot simply transfer the ownership of waste from in-state generators to the state in which it was generated, or transfer liability for generators’ damages to the

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204. McCulloch v. Maryland, 17 U.S. (4 Wheat.) 316, 406 (1819) (“The government of the United States, then, though limited in its powers, is supreme; and its laws, when made in pursuance of the Constitution, form the supreme law of the land, ‘anything in the constitutions or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding.’”) (citation omitted).


206. Id. at 2427.

207. Id.

208. Id. at 2428.

209. Id.
state, because these transfers would amount to a federally-imposed subsidy of waste generators by the state. In other words, the Court concluded that Congress does not possess the power to impose on the states the first alternative under the take-title provisions. According to the Court, such "federal action would 'commandeer' state governments into the service of federal regulatory purposes, and would for this reason be inconsistent with the Constitution's division of authority between federal and state governments." 

The Court found the second alternative, that the states must follow the dictates of the LLRWPA in order to avoid being forced to take title to the waste, to be "a simple command to state governments to implement legislation enacted by Congress," a command without constitutional authority. Under the Commerce Clause, Congress can permit the states to discriminate against interstate commerce, as it did in the first two sets of incentives: one set allows sited states to impose surcharges on waste received from other states, while the other allows states and compacts with waste dumps to increase the cost for out-of-state or out-of-region disposal and then to deny such disposal altogether. Under the spending clause, the Court stated that Congress can put conditions on federal funding to the states, as it did in the first set of incentives by requiring the states to comply with the milestones before they can receive surcharge repayments. However, the Court, finding no grant of authority that justified the take-title provision, held that the provision infringed the sovereignty reserved to the states by the Tenth Amendment.

The Court also set up a distinction between federal laws that affect both state and private activity and federal laws that affect only state activity. According to the Court, laws affecting both state and private activity provide a viable choice: states may regulate according to federal standards or may enact state regulations not preempted by federal law. Allowing the states to regulate subject to

210. Id.
211. Id.
212. Id.
213. Id. at 2425-26.
214. Id. at 2427.
215. Id. at 2426-27.
216. Id. at 2429.
217. See id. at 2423-25.
218. Id. at 2420, 2424.
federal limitations has been called "cooperative federalism." Laws regulating only state activity fail to provide any choice at all because not only must the states regulate, but they must regulate according to federal standards. A law which fails to give a state a choice of whether or not to regulate is perceived as inherently coercive, and it is this coercion that takes such laws out of the realm of cooperative federalism.

Justice O'Connor's analysis of federal-state interactions in New York reflects her approval of schemes that, like the Clean Air Act, are structured as a "partnership between the States and the Federal Government, animated by a shared objective . . . ." For Justice O'Connor, the key issue that determines if a federal law requiring state action is so coercive that it is unconstitutional is whether, under the law, the state retains accountability. According to the majority in New York, "Where Congress encourages state regulation rather than compelling it, state governments remain responsive to the local electorate's preferences; state officials remain accountable to the people." Under Justice O'Connor's view, if the citizens of New York elect state officials to carry out their desire that New York not implement any provisions for nuclear waste dis-


222. New York, 112 S. Ct. at 2424.

223. Id.

224. Id.
posal, Congress could legitimately pass federal legislation to fill that gap. What the federal government cannot do, however, is pass legislation forcing New York to regulate a specific area, because New York's elected officials would no longer retain accountability for the laws they are required to enforce. According to Justice O'Connor, since one of the primary attributes of a sovereign is accountability for its actions, a federal law that forces a state to control its citizens' behavior but does not allow the state to be accountable to those citizens intrudes too far upon the sovereignty of the state. Such a law, therefore, cannot withstand a constitutional challenge under the Tenth Amendment.

The majority in New York used the Tenth Amendment to justify its finding that the take-title provisions are an unconstitutional intrusion upon state sovereignty, but the opinion overlooked critical Tenth Amendment case law. The Court upheld the first two incentives because it could find some grant of authority to cover them, but the Court failed to find an appropriate home for the third incentive and subsequently held that it intruded upon an area of state authority. In deciding New York, however, Justice O'Connor declined to revisit the holdings of previous Tenth Amendment cases because, according to her analysis, the take-title provision applied only to state activity; it was "not a case in which Congress has subjected a State to the same legislation applicable to private parties." Since the take-title provision only regulated state and not

225. See id.
226. Id. at 2428.
227. Id. at 2420. Justice O'Connor did acknowledge the unsteady path the Court's jurisprudence has taken in this area but noted that it was not the time to revisit the holdings of those cases. See, e.g., Gregory v. Ashcroft, 111 S. Ct. 2395 (1991) (holding that Missouri's mandatory retirement age for state judges did not violate the Age Discrimination in Employment Act since a state's authority to determine the qualifications of judges "lies at the heart of representative government"); South Carolina v. Baker, 485 U.S. 505 (1988) (finding that § 310(b)(1) of the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982, which removed the federal income tax exemption for interest earned on long-term state and federal government bearer bonds, did not violate the Tenth Amendment); Garcia v. San Antonio Metro. Transit Auth., 469 U.S. 528 (1985) (overruling National League of Cities and holding state employers are once again subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act); EEOC v. Wyoming, 460 U.S. 226 (1983) (ruling that the Tenth Amendment does not preclude extension of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act to cover state and local government employees as the Act was a valid exercise of Congress's powers under the Commerce Clause); Transportation Union v. Long Island R.R. Co., 455 U.S. 678 (1982) (holding that Congress's authority to regulate labor relations in the railroad industry does not impair a state's ability to carry out its sovereign functions and is therefore not violative of the Tenth Amendment); National League of Cities v. Usery, 426 U.S. 833 (1976) (overruling Wirtz and holding state employers are not subject to Fair Labor Standards Act); Fry v. United States, 421 U.S. 542 (1975) (upholding the constitutionality of the Economic Stabilization Act of 1970); Maryland v.
private activity, it was not a "generally applicable law" such as those with which recent Supreme Court Tenth Amendment cases have been concerned.\footnote{228} Therefore Justice O'Connor saw no need to analyze the LLWRPAA under Tenth Amendment precedent. Rather, using traditional Commerce Clause analysis, she characterized the statute as one that compels the states to fulfill federal mandates without giving them a choice of whether to regulate at all.\footnote{229}

But merely because a provision is not made under an affirmative grant does not necessarily mean it infringes on the Tenth Amendment. According to Justice Byron White's partial dissent in New York,\footnote{230} the distinction between laws that regulate state and private activity and laws that regulate only state activity is an artificial distinction that allowed the Court to invalidate the take-title provision without analyzing the provision under Tenth Amendment case law.\footnote{231} As Justice White pointed out, "The Court's distinction between a federal statute's regulation of States and private parties for general purposes, as opposed to a regulation solely on the activities of States, is unsupported by our recent Tenth Amendment cases. In no case has the Court rested its holding on such a distinction."\footnote{232}

The question, according to Justice White, was not whether Congress had the power to regulate state or private disposal of nuclear waste but whether Congress could legitimately sanction the interstate compromises the states had reached.\footnote{233} Under the Commerce Clause, Congress has the authority to regulate the interstate nuclear waste disposal market.\footnote{234} Congress may also give the states the choice to regulate this activity according to federal standards or, if a state chooses not to regulate the area, to have the federal govern-

\begin{footnotes}
\item 228. \textit{New York}, 112 S. Ct. at 2420.
\item 229. \textit{Id.} at 2428-29.
\item 230. \textit{Id.} at 2435 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part). Justice O'Connor expressed the unanimous view of the Court that the monetary and access provisions were constitutional. Joining her in holding the take-title provision unconstitutional were Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justices Antonin Scalia, Anthony Kennedy, David Souter, and Clarence Thomas. Justice White dissented with respect to the take-title provision, and was joined by Justices Harry Blackmun and John Paul Stevens. Justice Stevens also wrote a separate dissent regarding the take-title provision.
\item 231. \textit{Id.} at 2441 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
\item 232. \textit{Id.} (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part) (stating that neither \textit{National League} nor \textit{Garcia} was decided based on this distinction).
\item 233. \textit{Id.} at 2435 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
\item 234. \textit{Id.} at 2419-20.
\end{footnotes}
ment regulate it instead. While this kind of legitimate choice does not violate the Tenth Amendment, validating a statute based solely on the existence of this kind of "either/or" choice provision overlooks other ways of viewing federal-state interactions. Justice White characterized the LLRWPAA as an example of cooperative federalism because he thought it could best be understood as "collective state action," as a "complex interstate agreement," and as "a delicate compromise" among the states.

One commentator has called "cooperative federalism" a euphemism for "the substantial expansion of federal power at the expense of state authority," positing an alternative characterization of the federal system as one of "interactive federalism." Although Justice White did not use this specific term, it seems to embody his concept of federalism. Under such a view, the LLRWPAA is the mechanism through which collectively-negotiated compromises can be effectuated. Given that the states did not want Congress to set up a federal regulatory plan, the take-title provision is not an unconstitutional infringement on state autonomy but rather the states' selected means of enforcement. The traditional Commerce Clause choice would have forced the states to regulate disposal of nuclear waste either according to the federal plan or to accept the fact that they could not regulate at all and have the federal plan fill the vacuum caused by the lack of state regulation. The states felt that this choice, though constitutionally permissible under the Commerce Clause, was too coercive. Specifically, they did not want Congress to decide where the waste repositories would be. Instead, what they did want was to develop a solution at the state level.

235. Id. at 2420.
236. Id. at 2439 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
237. Id. at 2441 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
238. Id. at 2446 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
239. Redish, supra note 219, at 874.
240. Id. at 880-81.
241. See, e.g., Status of Interstate Compacts for the Disposal of Low-Level Radioactive Waste: Hearing Before the Senate Comm. on the Judiciary, 98th Cong., 1st Sess. 3 (1983) (statement of Idaho Gov. John Evans, chairman of the Nuclear Power Subcommittee of the National Governors Association). Evans emphasized that each of the regions and their compacts had held strenuous negotiations in order to resolve problems unique to each region. Id. at 5. As a result, Evans urged Congress not to require rigid agreement in the compacts. Id.
243. Id. at 2437 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part) (arguing that this would force the states to "submit to another federal instruction").
244. Id. at 2436-37 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part) (citing H.R. REP. NO.
the states realized that Congress’s authority was needed to implement the plan, Congress’s role was seen as that of a referee who keeps all the players in the game, not as a super player who could come onto the field to replace a state player.\textsuperscript{246} The states’ solution looked like the first half of the traditional Commerce Clause choice: the states could regulate according to federal standards, although these were actually the same standards the states themselves had asked Congress to incorporate into the statute. The states rejected the second half of the Commerce Clause choice: they did not want the government to have the option of stepping in to fill the void in the instance a state chose not to regulate according to federal standards.\textsuperscript{246} Therefore, rather than rejecting the take-title provision because it did not fit the mold of a legitimate choice under the Commerce Clause, the Court could have formulated a different question: Whether cooperative federalism allows the states to give up the second half of a Commerce Clause choice provision? A review of Tenth Amendment case law suggests that the answer to this question is “yes.”

The very Tenth Amendment cases that Justice O’Connor failed to revisit in striking down the take-title provision\textsuperscript{247} appear to support the states’ ability to negotiate with each other and with Congress to solve the waste disposal problem. These Tenth Amendment cases focus on “ascertaining the constitutional line between federal and state power.”\textsuperscript{248} In \textit{Fry v. United States},\textsuperscript{249} which concerned a state challenge to the Economic Stabilization Act of 1970,\textsuperscript{250} the Supreme Court stated that “[e]ven activity that is purely intrastate in character may be regulated by Congress, where the activity, combined with like conduct by others similarly situated, affects commerce among the States or with foreign nations.”\textsuperscript{251} To control high

\textsuperscript{245} New York, 112 S. Ct. at 2428.
\textsuperscript{246} Id. at 2436-37 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
\textsuperscript{247} See supra note 227 (noting cases that illustrate the unsteady path of Tenth Amendment jurisprudence).
\textsuperscript{248} New York, 112 S. Ct. at 2417.
\textsuperscript{249} Fry v. United States, 421 U.S. 542, 547 (1975).
\textsuperscript{251} Fry, 421 U.S. at 547.
rates of inflation, the Act had authorized the President to stabilize wages and salaries, with the annual salary increases of covered employees not to exceed 5.5 percent. Ohio applied for approval under the statute of a 10.6 percent increase, but the Pay Board, established under the statute to oversee wage and salary controls, denied approval of such an increase. Two state employees sought to compel the state to honor the increase, and the Ohio Supreme Court granted their writ of mandamus and ordered payment. The United States then filed suit to enjoin Ohio from making the payments. On certification from the district court, the Temporary Emergency Court of Appeals held that the Act applied to state employees, concluding that this type of federal interference with state affairs was justifiable since large wage increases to large numbers of employees would substantially affect commerce. The Supreme Court later affirmed this decision.

Similarly, the Amendments' take-title provision, which required states to provide for disposal or take title to the waste, can arguably be viewed as regulating purely intrastate activity. But eliminating this take-title provision from the statute hampers the LLRWPA's ability to force states to comply with its timetable. If a state does not move quickly to fulfill the statute's dictates, time for accessing the existing waste sites will run out. States will then put pressure yet again on Congress to force the sited states to keep their dumps open. Such pressure by any particular state, combined with similar activity on the part of the other non-sited states, may be seen as activity affecting interstate commerce. Thus, the New York Court could have found that the Commerce Clause validated the take-title provision.

The state employees who brought the action in Fry contended that applying the Economic Stability Act to state employees was an interference with state sovereignty. The Fry Court replied that while the Tenth Amendment "is not without significance," it only

253. Fry, 421 U.S. at 544.
254. Id.
255. Id.
256. Id.
257. Id. at 545.
258. Id. at 547.
259. Id. at 548.
260. Id. at 547 n.7.
261. Id.
protects the states against a Congressional exercise of power "that impairs the States’ integrity or their ability to function effectively in a federal system."262 The Fry Court determined that the Economic Stability Act’s "wage restriction regulations constituted no such drastic invasion of state sovereignty."263 Although the Fry Court did not deal specifically with the question of accountability, elected Ohio officials complying with the Act had no control over wage increases for state employees; irate state citizens thus were not able to hold those elected officials accountable. Yet Justice O’Connor saw the requirement at issue in New York — that the states take title to the waste — as an impairment of state sovereignty because state officials would not be accountable to the citizens.264 Such a narrow view of accountability does not consider the ability of citizens to affect national policy through voting for federal representatives and could, therefore, effectively throttle many otherwise viable attempts at cooperative federalism.265 The federal sphere should encompass creative attempts at problem solving, such as the LLRWPAA’s take-title provision, even if the result is to impose restrictions on state autonomy that might seem to implicate the Tenth Amendment.

But if the provision is justifiable under the Commerce Clause, the Tenth Amendment need not be implicated at all. In National League of Cities v. Usery,266 the Supreme Court set out criteria by which a state activity would be considered beyond the reach of federal regulation.267 At issue in National League was whether Congress could, under the Commerce Clause, force the states to comply with the minimum-wage and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act,268 areas that were considered “traditional governmental functions.”269 In enjoining enforcement of various provisions of that act, the National League Court invoked the Tenth Amend-

262. Id.
263. Id.
265. See La Pierre, supra note 220, at 639-46.
269. National League, 426 U.S. at 851-52. The court included fire prevention, police protection, sanitation, public health, and parks and recreation as activities well within the arena of functions traditionally performed by state and local governments. Id. at 851 n.16.
ment\textsuperscript{270} and held that the act operated to "displace the States' freedom to structure integral operations in areas of traditional governmental functions."\textsuperscript{271} The criteria outlined in \textit{National League}, however, look to the federal statute rather than state activity to define an unacceptable federal command and to elucidate protected areas of state activity. The \textit{National League} Court stated that a statute is unacceptable if it regulates the "States as States,"\textsuperscript{272} if it addresses a matter that is an "attribute of state sovereignty,"\textsuperscript{273} and if compliance with it would impair a state's ability "to structure integral operations in areas of traditional governmental functions."\textsuperscript{274}

The Court, however, did not explain what it meant by "States as States," "attribute of state sovereignty," or "traditional governmental function." These phrases, though, would not remain vague for long.

Nine years later, in \textit{Garcia v. San Antonio Metropolitan Transit Authority},\textsuperscript{278} the Court determined whether the Fair Labor Standards Act could be applied to a municipal mass-transit system.\textsuperscript{276} In upholding such an application, the Court overruled \textit{National League} because the distinctions that \textit{National League} tried to draw between the appropriate spheres of state and federal authority were so amorphous as to be "unsound in principle and unworkable in practice."\textsuperscript{277} Although it was the product of a divided Court, \textit{Garcia} remains the Court's most definitive guide to analyzing at what point federal action impermissibly intrudes upon the states' sovereign sphere. The \textit{Garcia} Court rejected the notion that \textit{a priori} definitions of state sovereignty can be used to identify the scope of federal power under the Commerce Clause,\textsuperscript{278} declaring that state sovereignty is "more properly protected by procedural safeguards inherent in the structure of the federal system than by judicially-created limitations on federal power."\textsuperscript{279}

\textsuperscript{270} \textit{Id.} at 842-43 (citing Fry v. United States, 421 U.S. 542, 547 n.7 (1975)) (arguing that the Tenth Amendment prohibits Congress from acting in a way that inhibits the states' ability to function effectively in the federal system).

\textsuperscript{271} \textit{Id.} at 852.

\textsuperscript{272} \textit{Id.} at 854.

\textsuperscript{273} \textit{Id.} at 845.

\textsuperscript{274} \textit{Id.} at 852.

\textsuperscript{275} 469 U.S. 528 (1985).

\textsuperscript{276} \textit{Id.} at 530.

\textsuperscript{277} \textit{Id.} at 546.

\textsuperscript{278} \textit{Id.} at 548.

\textsuperscript{279} \textit{Id.} at 552.
The Court began to flesh out what it meant by procedural safeguards three years later in South Carolina v. Baker, which dealt with the constitutionality of sections of the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982 ("TEFRA"). Congress enacted TEFRA to improve compliance with federal tax laws in an attempt to reduce the federal deficit. Since unregistered bonds could be bought, sold, and given as gifts without leaving a "paper trail," Congress decided that all bonds, whether issued by states, the United States, or private corporations, should be subject to a registration requirement. South Carolina brought suit in the Supreme Court, claiming that this provision was invalid under the Tenth Amendment. To analyze the provision under the Tenth Amendment, the Court treated it as if it "directly regulated States by prohibiting outright the issuance of bearer bonds." The Court restated Garcia's holding that the limits on federal authority over the states are structural, rather than substantive: "States must find their protection from congressional regulation through the national political process, not through judicially defined spheres of unregulatable state activity." With regard to political process defects, the Court pointed out that South Carolina did not allege that it was deprived of a right to take part in the national political process. Rather, South Carolina argued that the process was flawed because the act was passed "by an uninformed Congress relying upon incomplete information." The Court responded that neither Garcia nor the Tenth Amendment allows courts to "second-guess the substantive basis for congressional legislation." It then concluded that since the political process was not defective, the Tenth Amendment was not implicated.

Although the New York Court found that the LLRWPA's take-
title provision violated the Tenth Amendment, the Court did not analyze it under Garcia's rationale. Had the Court relied on Garcia in examining the issues presented in New York, it might have found that the political process was not defective and that the Tenth Amendment was thus not implicated. The Garcia Court pointedly rejected the kind of a priori definitions on which the New York Court facilely relied. Justice O'Connor found the take-title provision unconstitutional because it took away a state government's accountability to its voters. To the extent that a law impedes a state government's responsibility to represent and be accountable to the citizens of the state, the law prevents the state from "functioning as a sovereign." But the LLRWPAA need not be viewed as impeding a state government's responsibility and accountability. The states fulfilled their responsibility to their citizens when, acting through the NGA, they negotiated a state-created and state-implemented plan. The accountability requirement was also satisfied because the elected officials at the state level are the ones who decide how a state will approach problems of local, state, and national ramifications, such as the disposal of nuclear waste. These officials are directly accountable, of course, to their constituents during their tenure in office. The NGA approached Congress with the concept of a state-created disposal plan in response to an outcry that the states wanted to implement local control. The LLRWPAA was based on a bill that "represent[ed] the diligent negotiating undertaken by' the National Governors' Association and 'embodied' the 'fundamentals of their settlement.'"

291. New York v. United States, 112 S. Ct. 2408, 2420 (1992) (stating that Garcia is not applicable if Congress has not subjected a state to the same legislation that applies to private parties).
293. New York, 112 S. Ct. at 2429.
294. Id. at 2436 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
297. Id. at 2437-38 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part) (quoted in 131 Cong.
LLRWPA and the LLRPAAA are therefore examples of state governments holding themselves accountable to their voters, and not the other way around.

Further, New York was one of the states that "worked through their Governors to petition Congress for the 1980 and 1985 Acts." New York adhered to the Act and the Amendments by entering into and withdrawing from compact negotiations, and in passing a state law to site a state waste disposal facility. It had actually selected five possible sites at the time it filed its lawsuit and it continued to take full advantage of the LLRPAAA's time extension for sending waste to the three sited compacts. In fact, Justice White in his dissent considered that New York's actions bespoke such a degree of approval of, cooperation with, and profit under the Acts that New York should have been "estopped from asserting the unconstitutionality of a provision that seeks merely to ensure that, after deriving substantial advantages from the 1985 Act, New York in fact must live up to its bargain by establishing an in-state low-level radioactive waste facility or assuming liability for its failure to act." New York, however, did not allege any flaw in the political process leading to the enactment of the LLRWPA or the LLRPAAA. The Court's statement that the Amendments caused state officials to "consent to the enlargement of the powers of Congress beyond those enumerated in the Constitution" simply ignores the considerable procedural safeguards in place during the extensive negotiations leading to the LLRPAAA's passage.

Under Garcia, the LLRPAAA does not invade the states' sovereignty, but instead recognizes that sovereignty. New York did not concern a circumstance in which Congress used the states as "implements of regulation." Rather, the situation was the converse: the states, in an attempt to solve an intractable problem intimately affecting each of them, struck a deal with Congress. The states would set up the rules under which they wanted nuclear waste dis-


298. Id. at 2439 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
299. Id.
300. Id.
301. Id.
302. Id. at 2440 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
303. Id. at 2439 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
304. Id. at 2432.
305. Id. at 2420.
posal to be dealt with and then Congress would pass those rules, initially as the LLRWPA and, five years later, as the LLRWPAA. The federal goals of the Act and the Amendments were none other than the states' goals. Although the take-title provision was not part of the deal negotiated by the NGA, the NGA had "anticipated that Congress might eventually have to take stronger steps to ensure compliance with long-range planning deadlines . . . ." Recognizing that the 1980 Act's fatal flaw was its lack of an ultimate sanction on noncomplying states, the Senate added the take-title provision to make the state-initiated Amendments fully effective. Viewing the take-title provision as Congress's commandeering of the states' legislative processes overlooks the history and purpose of the original Act and the Amendments.

The sited states fought the characterization of the take-title provision as an unconstitutional infringement of state sovereignty by asking how a federal statute could be an impermissible encroachment on state sovereignty when state officials had consented to its enactment. Justice O'Connor found this to be a troubling question. To answer it, she relied on a recent Supreme Court dissent stating that "federalism secures to citizens the liberties that derive from the diffusion of sovereign power." As Garcia pointed out, however, the procedural safeguards woven into the fabric of the federal system ensure that the federal government does not infringe the liberties of citizens.

In holding that the take-title provision invades the states' sphere

306. See id. at 2436 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
307. Id.
308. See 131 CONG. REC. S18,113 (daily ed. Dec. 19, 1985) (statement of Sen. Johnston) (stating that the take-title provision "insures that the State will not be able to avoid the financial consequences of failure to provide adequately for the disposal of its low-level radioactive waste").
310. New York, 112 S. Ct. at 2428.
311. Id. at 2431.
312. Id.
313. Id. (quoted in Coleman v. Thompson, 111 S. Ct. 2546, 2570 (1991) (Blackmun, J., dissenting)). Justice O'Connor also quoted Gregory v. Ashcroft: "Just as the separation and independence of the coordinate Branches of the Federal Government serves to prevent the accumulation of excessive power in any one Branch, a healthy balance of power between the States and the Federal Government will reduce the risk of tyranny and abuse from either front." Id. at 2431 (citing Gregory v. Ashcroft, 111 S. Ct. 2395, 2400 (1991)). Justice O'Connor then went on to say that when Congress exceeds its authority relative to the States, such behavior cannot be ratified by the "consent" of state officials. Id.
of authority, the Court prophesied that similar departures from traditional federal structure could be sought by either the federal or state government because they might be in the personal interest of both federal and state officials. To illustrate this point, the Court posited a scenario: If a federal official could choose a disposal site or could direct a state to make that choice, the federal official would most likely have the state choose and thus avoid accountability to the voters. If a state official could either select the dump site or let the federal official choose, the state official would very likely prefer that the federal official make the choice for the same reason. But the Court did not conclude from its cynical hypothetical that this would result in the absolute elimination of the voters’ power to express their views about their elected officials through the ballot box. Instead, the Court feebly concluded that where the “interests of public officials thus may not coincide with the Constitution’s intergovernmental allocation of authority . . . federalism is hardly being advanced.”

If voter accountability is the sole criterion motivating the Court to overturn the take-title provision, such accountability was inherent in the development of the act from its inception. The states explicitly sought a method through which they themselves could choose the location of a disposal site, laying their elected officials open to voter retribution. Federalism is hardly being advanced when a procedurally sound, state-created, and state-endorsed method to keep states in control of a process of vital concern to them is truncated because of the Court’s own narrow view of accountability. Finally, in light of the fact that the states would have to yield if Congress chose to preempt the field, the states’ ability to get Congress to do what they want shows the “process” of federalism actively at work. As the Garcia Court pointed out, “The political process ensures that laws that unduly burden the States will not be promulgated.” If Congress had, indeed, preempted the field and tried to pass something like the Act and the Amendments without recognizing the autonomy the states demonstrated they were capable of exercising,

315. New York, 112 S. Ct. at 2432.
316. Id.
317. Id.
318. See supra notes 294-97 and accompanying text (outlining the role of the states in creating the Original Act and its Amendments).
passage of the legislation might well have been impossible or, at the very least, slow and difficult. As it is, some states would have preferred that the LLRWPA and the LLRPWA not be passed; those states are the same ones that have been slow to act under the statute's mandates. But there were no procedural flaws that justified overturning the Act's key enforcement provision. Seen in light of the statute's history and purpose, the LLRWPA is not coercive; it does not deny voters the chance to vote out of office those who developed it, and rather than intruding on state autonomy, it respects that autonomy.

The New York Court held that the take-title provision was severable from the rest of the Amendments. In the Court's view, the take-title provision could be severed "without doing violence to the rest of the Act." The Act would still be "operative" and would still serve "Congress' objective of encouraging the States to attain local or regional self-sufficiency in the disposal of low level radioactive waste." The Court stated that the Act still included "two incentives that coax the States along this road." The Court pointed out that if waste generators in a noncomplying state cannot obtain access to other states' disposal sites, the generators may well exert pressure on their own recalcitrant state to comply with the Original Act and Amendments, even without the state being forced to take title. Specifically with regard to New York, the Court pointed out that the "sited regional compacts need not accept New York's waste after the seven-year transition period expires ...." Practically, this means that New York may continue to export its waste until 1996. By then it must have arrangements in place for shipping its waste to an out-of-state depository or it must have already opened its own waste dump, available for use by both New York's as well as out-of-state waste producers.

321. See supra notes 155-80 and accompanying text (discussing Michigan's ouster from the Midwest Compact).
322. New York, 112 S. Ct. at 2434.
323. Id.
324. Id.
325. Id. The Court took the teeth out of the LLRWPA; without the take-title provision, the Amendments are not much more effective than the 1980 Act they replaced.
326. Id.
327. Id.
329. See supra note 79-82 and accompanying text (discussing the disadvantages of opening a dump when a state is not a member of a compact).
While the New York Court spoke in general terms about the severability of the take-title provision, according to Justice Stevens's dissent, the provision "remains enforceable against the 44 States that have joined interstate compacts . . . because the compacting States have, in their agreements, embraced that provision and given it independent effect." 330 Thus the practical effect of this case is limited to those states that were not members of compacts at the time of the decision. 331

V. Conclusion

The LLRWPA was the second piece of federal legislation dealing with the ubiquitous problem of low-level nuclear waste disposal. Congress had to amend the original 1980 Act to give it more effective authority. Under this enhanced authority, the states proceeded more or less in step 332 with the Amendments' modified schedule until the Supreme Court invalidated one of the key provisions in New York. 333 The Court struck down the take-title provision, under which states that did not meet the statute's time frame for waste disposal provisions would have to take title to and responsibility for the waste generated within their borders. The Court found that the take-title provision was an impermissible command to state governments to regulate according to the dictates of Congress. The Court did not analyze the case under prevailing Tenth Amendment precedent such as Garcia v. San Antonio Metropolitan Transit Authority. 334 If it had done so, the Court might have found the provision to be a viable example of cooperative federalism. Although the Court intended to protect New York from federal legislation that would impair its sovereignty, it completely overlooked the procedural safeguards required by Garcia, safeguards that were in place during the development of the Amendments. In striking down the take-title provision, the Court removed the strongest incentive for states to cooperate with the LLRWPA.

Nonconstitutional challenges to the Act, such as the steps Michi

330. New York, 112 S. Ct. at 2447 n.3 (Stevens, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
331. New York could try to negotiate space in another state's or compact's dump, or it could follow Texas's lead and arrange to sell space in its own dump to a state with smaller waste volumes. See supra note 148 (discussing Texas's dealings with the New England states).
332. But see supra notes 155-80 and accompanying text (describing the actions of Michigan which eventually led to its removal from the Midwest Compact).
gan took prior to its ouster from the Midwest Compact, suggest some procedural responses Congress could make. For example, Congress could attempt to cap the restrictiveness of state site selection criteria. At some trigger point, a waffling host state that finally withdraws from a compact might be made to pay the added surcharges the other states incur as a result of their reliance on the host state to locate a site.

New York's constitutional challenge also suggests some possible legislative responses. Justice White, in his dissent in New York, outlined three possibilities. First, Congress could authorize the take-title provision under the Spending Clause by making a state's willingness to take title a condition for receiving its share of collected surcharge monies. Secondly, if a state does not either establish a dump for its wastes or negotiate space in some other state's or compact's dump by the statute's deadline, Congress could directly regulate that state's nuclear waste producers pursuant to its Commerce Clause power. Finally, White noted that Congress could create a right in the generators to sue state officials for failing to establish the disposal options provided for in federal-state programs.

Whatever response Congress chooses to make with regard to the New York decision, the LLRWPAA's legality in areas except the take-title provision has been established. The states fought hard to make disposing of low-level nuclear waste their responsibility and the take-title provision grew directly out of that fight. Subject to all the customary procedural safeguards in place during its enactment, the take-title provision could have been found to be a legitimate exercise in cooperative federalism, notwithstanding Tenth Amendment review. Even though the Court held that the take-title provision was unconstitutional with regard to New York, states already in compacts remain bound by all the LLRWPAA's provisions. While it is probable that no state really wants to begin operating a nuclear waste disposal facility, the states already committed to compacts are making progress in meeting the LLRWPAA's goals. The take-title provision is the bite behind the LLRWPAA's bark. Nipped into action by that provision as they are, compacting states probably find compliance with the time frames less painful than might be anticipated because they participated in the drafting of the LLRWPAA,

335. Id. at 2445 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
336. Id.
337. Id. at 2445-46 (White, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part).
from its conception through its realization. Despite the *New York* decision, the state-based and state-created LLRWPA remains a viable demonstration of federalism.