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# FOREWORD

*William J. Peters*

Hazardous substances pose serious dangers to society. Congress has passed a great deal of legislation aimed at reducing these dangers. Some states have also responded with legislation. The problem, however, is far from being solved and, although a great many steps have been taken, a great many things remain to be done.

The problem should be defined as how to control hazardous substances and not how to eliminate them. These substances are too important to our society—whether they are wastes from production processes, or specific products themselves—to be eliminated. Hazardous substances are present in a wide range of situations and pose varying degrees of risk. Furthermore, substances are often discovered to be hazardous long after they have been produced. These factors indicate how important and complex the problem of controlling hazardous substances is. Consequently, the search for better control of the problem must be constantly pursued.

The different subjects covered by the articles in this issue of the *Journal* also give an indication of the scope of the problem of controlling hazardous substances. The first article, by Dan Tarlock, Professor at the Chicago-Kent College of Law, looks at the problem of storing hazardous waste material. Next is an article by Barry Trilling, formerly a lawyer with the United States Department of Justice, which explores a statutory attempt to prevent the escape of hazardous material into the environment. The problem of who pays the clean-up costs when hazardous waste material is improperly stored or disposed of is then examined in an article by James Vernon and Patrick Dennis, who are with the Los Angeles law firm of McCutchen, Black, Verleger & Shea. Finally, Wendy Stockton, a UCLA law student, argues that our society's approach to the problem is too narrowly focused and that we need to expand our focus if we really want to control this problem.

Given the space constraint of this journal, the symposium can not provide an exhaustive look at the problem of controlling hazardous substances. Instead, it only scratches the surface of the

problem. We hope that the symposium will nevertheless shed some new light on this vital issue and also stimulate more effort and progress toward decreasing the risks that hazardous substances pose to society.