In its place, recycling, resource recovery, and waste-to-energy programs and technologies will be widespread, forced by rising disposal costs, by new regulations, and by local and global pressure. The National Solid Waste Management Association estimates that recycling alone will account for around 26 percent of solid waste disposal by 2000 (from current levels of around 14 percent), thus forcing activity in related fields such as the processing of recyclable material, the development of products from organic wastes, and the separating of waste.

The waste-to-energy (WTE) and resource recovery market is estimated at around $17 billion annually, with rapid growth (15 percent). There are some 130 WTE facilities in operation which handle around 16 percent of municipal waste. As waste disposal costs increase, WTE facilities will become more economic - it is estimated that $20 billion will be spent on WTE plants between 1991 and 2000 and that WTE will handle 28 percent of municipal solid waste by the year 2000.

Medical waste is another rapidly growing aspect of the market, expected to grow from a $1 billion market in 1990 to $5 billion in 1994. Waste handling, tracking, packaging and disposal are valued areas of expertise in this regard.

3.4 Hazardous Waste Management

The current number of hazardous waste sites is substantial and growing. There are 1240 Superfund sites, 30 thousand sites in CERCLA's information system inventory, and over 130 thousand industrial sites facing hazardous waste challenges. There are some 20 thousand municipal and utility facilities which each generate more than 55 gallons of hazardous waste monthly.

The $23 billion market addresses such problems as site assessment, remediation and detection, and waste treatment through recycling, detoxification and stabilization. Chemical companies, primary and fabricated metal companies, paper manufacturers, electrical equipment manufacturers, and transportation companies will be increasingly pressured in hazardous waste management areas.

The following table (Table 5) and paragraphs summarize various components of the hazardous waste market in 1991. For reasons of overlap (and comparing on occasion 1990 and 1991 data), the statistics do not always exactly correspond. They should be interpreted as best estimates aimed at providing an idea of the magnitude of the various areas and the various rates of growth.