EPA proposal would implement settlement on air toxics deadlines: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed deadlines for as many as 80,000 industrial facilities nationwide to submit permit applications for hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) over the next two-and-a-half years. The proposed rule would set deadlines for facilities in more than 60 source categories to submit applications for permits under the Clean Air Act between May 15, 2003, and Aug. 13, 2005. EPA issued the proposal in compliance with a Nov. 26 settlement of a lawsuit brought by the Sierra Club, which had challenged the agency’s decision to extend the deadline for industries to submit applications for state permits that would set technology-based emissions standards for HAPs. The standards are based on Maximum Achievable Control Technology (MACT). EPA met the deadline for most source categories, but industries in those source categories for which the agency failed to issue emissions standards faced a deadline of May 15, 2002, for submitting detailed applications to state regulators. Because of the tremendous burden this requirement would have placed on industries and state regulators, EPA published a final rule April 5 that extended the deadline for applications.

NRC report urges new approach to feedlot emissions: A report from the National Research Council (NRC) calls for a more sophisticated approach to estimating emissions of air pollutants from animal feeding operations. The report, published by the council’s Committee on Air Emissions from Animal Feeding Operations, said the current method of estimating emissions based on the number of animals or pounds of meat produced is “generally inadequate” because emissions can vary widely depending on the kind of animals being fed, the diet and housing provided for the animals, and other factors. Instead, emissions estimations should be based on factors such as the amount and content of the feed consumed at an operation, the report said.

Groups decry U.S. plans to export toxic ships: Environmental activists are voicing opposition to what they say are the Bush administration’s efforts to reverse a moratorium on the export of obsolete U.S. Navy vessels to developing countries for dismantling. The move would be a violation of domestic laws, as well as international environmental conventions, the groups say. Representatives from Greenpeace, the Basel Action Network, and Toxics Link India issued a joint statement denouncing the provisions in a U.S. defense appropriations bill setting aside $20 million for a pilot project that could involve the immediate export of up to four vessels from the National Defense Reserve Fleet, as well as the sinking of ships at sea for artificial reefs. The activists said that the project could open the door for the eventual export of more than 300 ships. The ships are known to contain significant quantities of hazardous asbestos and polychlorinated biphenyls. The complaints came after parties to the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal formally adopted new international guidelines on the environmentally sound management of the dismantling of ships, also known as “ship-breaking.” The guidelines were established to prevent developing countries from being used as dumping grounds for toxic substances contained in the ships.

NASA technology doubles as converter of toxic pollutants: Technology originally developed by NASA for climate research and designed to measure the chemical composition of the Earth’s atmosphere will soon be available to reduce automobile emissions. NASA’s laser technology, known as Low-Temperature Oxidation Catalysts (LTOC), will be on the market for commercial use in vehicle exhaust systems by the end of 2004, according to Airflow Catalyst Systems Inc., Rochester, NY, the exclusive licensee for the internal combustion application. The new technology could reduce emissions of three pollutants—carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, and nitrogen oxides—by 30% and cut the cost of after-market catalytic converters by 25%.

Upcoming A&WMA Annual Conferences

June 22–26, 2003 ➤ San Diego, CA
June 20–24, 2004 ➤ Indianapolis, IN
June 19–23, 2005 ➤ Minneapolis, MN
June 18–22, 2006 ➤ New Orleans, LA
June 24–27, 2007 ➤ Pittsburgh, PA