



When Congress considered whether to regulate more closely the handling of wastes from oil and gas drilling in the 1980s, it turned to the Environmental Protection Agency to research the matter. E.P.A. researchers concluded that some of the drillers' waste was hazardous and should be tightly controlled.

But that is not what Congress heard. Some of the recommendations concerning oil and gas waste were eliminated in the final report handed to lawmakers in 1987.

"It was like the science didn't matter," Carla Greathouse, the author of the study, said in a recent interview. "The industry was going to get what it wanted, and we were not supposed to stand in the way."

E.P.A. officials told her, she said, that her findings were altered because of pressure from the Office of Legal Counsel of the White House under Ronald Reagan. A spokesman for the E.P.A. declined to comment.

Ms. Greathouse's experience was not an isolated case. More than a quarter century of efforts by some lawmakers and regulators to force the federal government to police the industry better have been thwarted, as E.P.A. studies have been repeatedly narrowed in scope, and important findings have been removed.

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