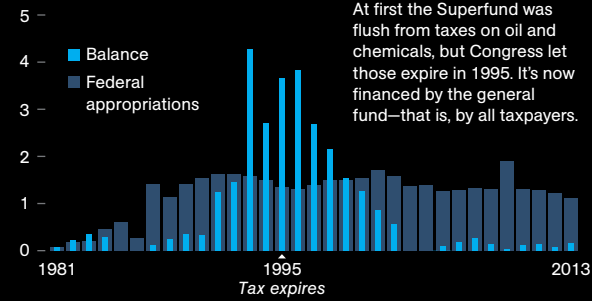


A Nationwide Cleanup

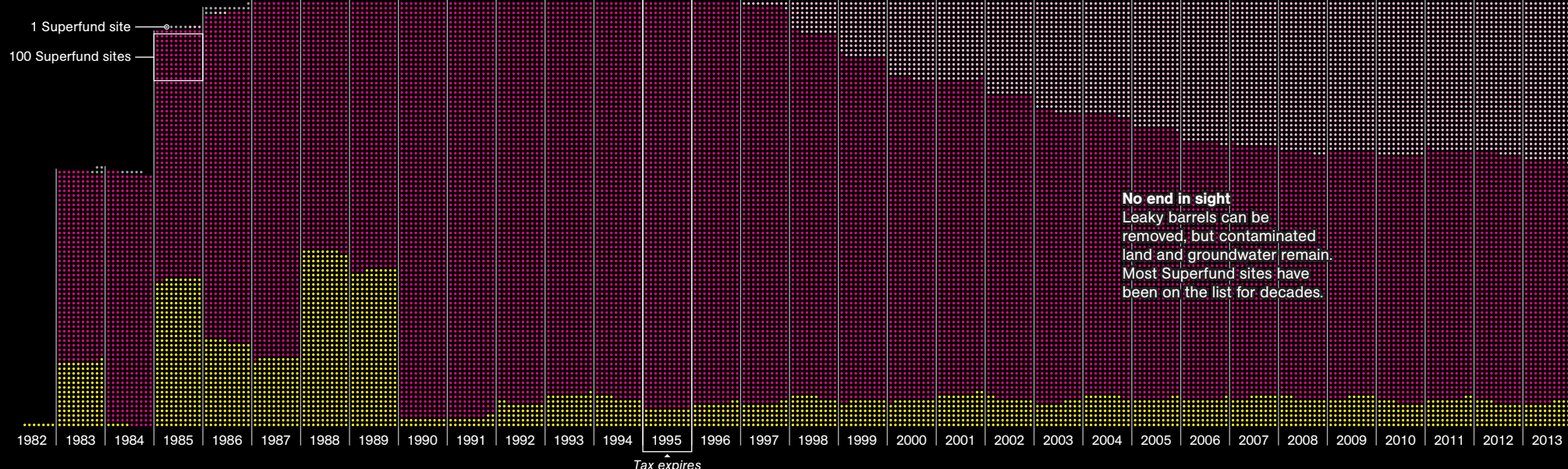
Since Congress passed the Superfund law in 1980, many of the worst hazardous waste sites in the U.S. have either been cleaned up or brought under control. But hundreds more are works in progress—and 95 of them, says the EPA, may be exposing humans to dangerous levels of toxic chemicals. A depleted Superfund and shrinking appropriations from Congress have delayed cleanup at some sites.

Status of the fund in 2013 dollars, billions



At first the Superfund was flush from taxes on oil and chemicals, but Congress let those expire in 1995. It's now financed by the general fund—that is, by all taxpayers.

The National Priorities List
 Since 1982 the EPA has listed more than 1,700 waste sites, of more than 47,000 total, as Superfund sites. When polluters can't be made to pay for cleanup, the Superfund pays.



NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST STATUS, 2013

Deleted: 370
 All cleanup efforts have been completed, and the site has been removed from the National Priorities List.

Construction completed: 790
 All the physical facilities necessary for cleanup—a landfill cap, say, or a water treatment plant—have been built. These facilities may need to be operated and maintained indefinitely.

Active: 525
 Cleanup facilities have not yet been completed.

Proposed: 54
 Sites have been studied, and cleanup plans proposed.

No end in sight
 Leaky barrels can be removed, but contaminated land and groundwater remain. Most Superfund sites have been on the list for decades.

Numbers shown are statuses as of the end of each fiscal year (September 30).
 JASON TREAT, NGM STAFF; MEG ROOSEVELT AND JAMIE HAWK. SOURCES: EPA, GAO