

requiring that the first round of experiments be directed toward settling specific issues bearing on safety. But the intent of the Asilomar conference was that the work should proceed under appropriate safeguards, and the safeguards recommended in the NIH guidelines are at least as strict, in some instances more so, than those outlined in the conference document.

This result was not achieved without effort. The first draft of the guidelines was generally weaker than the Asilomar

document, so much so that Berg, a chief architect of the conference, complained to the NIH that one feature of the draft was "very likely to draw the charge of self-serving tokenism." A member of the NIH committee, Stanley Falkow of the University of Washington, Seattle, described another aspect of the draft as "tantamount to a hunting license for any hack or high school student to do these experiments with the blessing of the NIH."

In response to these and many similar

criticisms, the NIH committee tightened up the guidelines to produce what is essentially the present version. The only important aspect in which the NIH guidelines still seem to be weaker than the Asilomar resolution concerns the surveillance of laboratory workers to see whether containment is in fact working. According to the statement agreed on at Asilomar, "It is strongly recommended that appropriate health surveillance of all personnel, including serological monitoring, be conducted periodically to estab-

Briefing

Coastal Zone: \$1.2-Billion Energy Impact Fund Approved

On 30 June Congress completed action on a bill substantially increasing federal aid for coastal zone management and creating a Coastal Energy Impact Fund authorized to dispense up to \$1.2 billion in loans and grants over the next 10 years. The impact money, which can be spent for a variety of public services and facilities (such as roads, schools, and hospitals), will help coastal communities accommodate the population growth and economic activity associated with development of outer continental shelf oil and gas and of facilities such as deepwater ports, refineries, and tank farms.

To make the bill acceptable to Secretary of Commerce Elliott Richardson and other Ford Administration officials, the primary emphasis in the Impact Fund was shifted from direct grants to bond and loan guarantees, although up to one-third of the \$1.2 billion can still be given out in grants. Environmental lobbyists had been worried that the impact aid would needlessly encourage the siting of energy facilities in the coastal zone, but, as finally passed, the bill was acceptable to them as well.

Secretary Richardson, head of the interagency Energy Resources Council as well as the Department of Commerce, is now known to believe that the land management and energy impact aid concepts adopted for the coastal zone should be extended to interior regions that will feel the impact of various kinds of energy resource development. This suggests the possibility that the Administration may try to bootleg land use legislation—which many conservatives disperse—under the label of energy resource management.

Under the coastal zone program, a state becomes eligible for continuing fi-

nancial assistance for its management activities once its program has been found to meet certain criteria as to its scope, balance, and supporting regulatory authority. And, once a state's program has been approved, all federal actions must be consistent with it.

The bill that Congress has just sent to the President would amend the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. It would give further impetus to coastal zone planning and management by the state and local governments by increasing the annual funding authorization from the present \$45 million to \$121 million, not counting a special one-time authorization of \$50 million for planning which is specially related to the development of energy facilities. Only about \$18 million was actually budgeted and appropriated for this past fiscal year.—L.J.C.

Toxic Pollutants: Court Approves Agreement

The Environmental Protection Agency is now legally obligated to undertake immediately a new comprehensive regulatory program for the control of toxic water pollutants. As part of this program, the EPA is to initiate this month a \$20 million program of contract studies which will extend over the next 3 years.

The EPA commitment to the new program is set forth in an agreement negotiated between the agency and the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Environmental Defense Fund, and other organizations to settle several pending lawsuits (*Science*, 21 May). The environmental groups had sued the agency for its failure to meet certain deadlines and other requirements of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (FWPCA) of 1972 with respect to toxic pollutants.

The settlement agreement became

binding last month after its approval by Judge Thomas A. Flannery of the U.S. District Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Under the agreement, the EPA is supposed to have completed issuing effluent limitations and technology performance standards for the control of toxic pollutants before 1980. These limitations and standards are to be based on findings arrived at through the ambitious program of contract studies.

The studies will be of three kinds: some will have the aim of determining the ecological and health effects of the 65 toxic pollutants and classes of pollutants listed in the agreement; others will describe the present and developing state of control technology for each of 21 specified industrial categories; and still others will assess the probable economic impact on particular industries of requiring the "best available technology" (BAT) for the control of toxic pollutants.

Industrial polluters have all along been facing a 1983 deadline under the FWPCA for the installation of BAT. The studies and regulations called for in the new agreement will be directed specifically at the problem posed by toxic pollutants, which can be troublesome.

Most major industries will be affected by the agreement, and many industry groups urged Judge Flannery not to approve it (the National Coal Association, which signed the agreement, was an exception). They argued, in effect, that it seeks to get around the heavy procedural demands spelled out in a section of the FWPCA dealing with toxic pollutants.

So far, however, no industry or association of industries has given notice that it will appeal Flannery's decision. One attorney involved in the case on the side of industry told *Science* that such an appeal was unlikely. The agreement leaves industry free to challenge any or all of the specific regulations that the EPA will issue, and such challenges will no doubt be coming thick and fast.—L.J.C.