

prevent an epidemic from breaking out should swine flu reappear. But federal health officials would presumably still seek to vaccinate the rest of the population to protect individuals from harm.

The military services—as is their custom—plan to use a more potent and more broadly constituted vaccine than will be used in the civilian program. Whereas most civilians would receive a

vaccine dose of 200 CCA units targeted solely against swine flu, the military services will administer a 1300-CCA dose, of which 400 CCA units (twice the civilian level) will be targeted at swine flu and the remainder will protect against two other flu strains. The primary purpose of the military immunization program is to conserve the nation's fighting force rather than to protect individuals, so the milita-

ry puts greater emphasis on making certain that the vaccine is strong enough to provide protection; it is less concerned about possible side effects, unless those side effects threaten to disable the fighting force. As one top military medical man put it, "Generally speaking, it's not at all intolerable for recruits to have a bad evening. . . . They are febrile. They do feel lousy. . . . A significant number

Shedding Light on Facts About ERDA's Role in Nuclear Debate

Five states—Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Oregon, and Washington—plan to hold referenda which call into question the safety of nuclear power, and in a sixth, California, voters have already turned down a nuclear "initiative" by a 2 to 1 margin. In the face of unprecedented public interest in nuclear matters, senior officials of the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) have described the agency's public information policy as being one of strict nonintervention: while continuing to promote nuclear as well as other forms of energy, it would not seek to influence the outcome of the referenda by campaigning on the side of the nuclear industry.

But last month nine public interest groups, including the organizations responsible for the six initiative campaigns, accused ERDA of violating this pledge of nonintervention by "actively working" against the California initiative. The charges are based largely on letters and memoranda which the Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. The documents indicate an underlying hostility to the initiative in the minds of ERDA officials, as well as certain actions which show that in the several months prior to the California initiative ERDA was anything but a disinterested bystander.

- The San Francisco operations office of ERDA, the documents show, distributed some 500 "invitations" to civic clubs, chambers of commerce, Farm Bureau groups, teachers associations, and school administrations, encouraging them to ask ERDA for speakers. In February, for instance, letters went out to 22 district leaders of California Lions and Elks clubs, the letter to the Elks beginning, "Many people these days are worried about a recurrence of the kinds of inflation, factory shutdowns, and curtailment of life style we experienced during the OPEC oil embargo. . . ." After a reference to "self-proclaimed experts and special interest groups" who make exaggerated claims for energy conservation, the letter said the public must come to share ERDA's "understanding" of the available energy options so that informed and responsible decisions can be made to turn the nation away from oil and gas to "more abundant resources." The word nuclear is nowhere mentioned.

- The deputy manager of the San Francisco office, Donald E. Reardon, gave a state Senate committee testimony to the effect that the initiative, if passed, would cost Californians \$40 billion over the next 20 years. The anti-initiative forces, an ERDA memo mentions, had indicated that they would use this evaluation as the basis for their economic position. As the campaign developed, the anti-initiative camp did in fact make substantial use of ERDA's figures.

- A memorandum prepared by William T. Miles, in the office of the Assistant Administrator for Nuclear Energy, after a round of meetings with utilities, General Electric and others, reports that "Almost everyone working to defeat the initiative thinks the most important thing that ERDA can do is make a *definitive* statement on waste management. All other technical issues pale in significance to this one." (The strongly affirmative technical report on the status of waste management alternatives that was forthcoming in May had been in the works since last year.)

The actions revealed in the documents obtained by PIRG follow a similar incident which was the subject of a special hearing by a House subcommittee—the printing by ERDA of 100,000 copies of a pamphlet entitled "Shedding Light on Facts About Nuclear Energy," 78,000 of which were distributed in California several months before the initiative.

Asked to comment on the charges that the agency deliberately and systematically intervened in the California initiative on the side of the nuclear industry, ERDA spokesmen say that ERDA has done no wrong. John W. King, director of public affairs, told *Science* that, although he had not yet reviewed the allegations in fine detail, "I'm not ready to say that any of it is fair criticism."

Last January, in a memo to ERDA's deputy administrator about "nuclear public education activities," King concluded by saying that, "Although efforts are being increased, there is no plan to storm into a state with a major campaign. Educational efforts must be handled carefully because undoubtedly our activities will be closely scrutinized by those who oppose our programs and favor state initiatives." King now maintains that any special information activities directed to California, such as the major effort at soliciting invitations for ERDA speakers, simply reflected the increased demand for information about energy issues in that state. And, as for the specific allegation that the economic impact evaluation was blatant propaganda, ERDA spokesmen say that it was based on data developed by California's energy and public utilities commissions and that its conclusions are similar to those reached in a Bank of America study.

Nevertheless, ERDA's behavior may not be so easily explained. Noting the apparent contradictions between the ERDA documents and the pledge that ERDA will not intervene in state initiatives, John Abbotts of the Public Interest Research Group says, "ERDA has been lying through its teeth." One does not have to put the matter so plainly and uncompromisingly to believe that, in its public information activities, the agency has indeed stepped beyond the limits which it has set for itself.—L.J.C.