idence, any regulation of formaldehyde would be premature. It prefers that regulators wait for the results of a $500,000 NCI survey of the medical records of 17,000 formaldehyde workers. The study, which is just beginning, will not be completed for 2 to 3 years. However, according to one epidemiologist, the NCI study will be limited by the inability to obtain accurate exposure data for each worker. The NCI study coordinator, Aaron Blair, says, however, that the study should provide useful information about the incidence of more common cancers, such as lung or prostatic cancer, among the survey group. The study probably will not be sensitive enough to provide statistically significant data on the incidence of nasal cancer, which is the malignancy that developed in rats tested by industry and NYU.

The Formaldehyde Institute has been energetic and effective in persuading regulatory agencies to reconsider their positions on formaldehyde, even when they appeared to be on the brink of regulating the chemical. One of the Formaldehyde Institute's principal lawyers is John Byington, former head of the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Last summer, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration tried to fire one of its top scientists after Byington wrote a letter to the agency complaining about the scientist's statement that formaldehyde is an animal carcinogen. The proposal was dropped after a congressional hearing on the matter. Although OSHA's official position now is that formaldehyde is an animal carcinogen, the agency apparently has no immediate plans to regulate it. The health division of the Consumer Product Safety Commission was to recommend by 6 October whether to ban the use of urea-formaldehyde foam insulation but the report has been postponed until February, in part because the Formaldehyde Institute questioned the quality of exposure data.

The trade group has gotten more than a foot in the door at EPA, where formaldehyde industry representatives met with EPA officials on 19 June, 28 July, and 14 August. According to documents obtained by Moffett's subcommittee, the first meeting with 23 participants included six members of the Formaldehyde Institute and only one scientist among many outside of government who dispute the industry's interpretation of the data. Another outside scientist, who attended at the request of the Formaldehyde Institute, was Harry Demopoulos, a pathology professor at NYU Medical Center. Last spring Demopoulos told the Consumer Product Safety Commission that NYU's environmental institute had "discounted" an earlier study that showed a mixture of formaldehyde and hydrochloric acid caused cancer in rats. Upton has said Demopoulos' statement is groundless. No scientists from the NYU institute were present at the EPA meeting. Industry participated heavily in the other two sessions as well.

EPA officials, past and present, say that meetings to exchange extensive scientific data are traditionally announced in a public notice. Moffett noted in a letter to Hernandez that, under the law, advisory meetings between agency officials and regulated industries are subject to public disclosure. Hernandez replied in a 6 October letter that no notice was required because the meetings were not rule-making proceedings. He wrote, "[T]he sessions were not formal proceedings, but rather were designed to be free exchanges among the scientists and other technical experts in order to explore fully the scientific and technical issues."

Some of the participants at the formaldehyde meetings say they have been asked by Hernandez not to discuss them and to refer calls to him. One EPA scientist when asked about the sessions said, "I can't talk to you. I'm not a courageous man. I don't want to lose my job."

EPA held similar meetings with representatives of the DEHP industry during the summer. The sessions, which the Formaldehyde Institute has dubbed "science courts," have met with great enthusiasm from industry. James Ramey, board chairman of the Formaldehyde Institute, wrote to Hernandez, "I would be remiss if I didn't take the opportunity to thank you for inviting the Formaldehyde Institute to participate in the first 'Science Court.' I found the forum intellectually stimulating and very helpful in putting a large volume of highly complex data into proper perspective. . . . I predict that the 'Science Court' may be a lasting trademark of this Administration."

As a result of the science courts, EPA's intention to regulate formaldehyde and DEHP is in limbo. The Natural Resources Defense Council hopes to spur the agency into motion in November with a lawsuit charging the agency with failure "to carry out its statutory duties . . . under the Toxic Substances Control Act." Albert, like many others, is not optimistic about EPA's future role in regulation. "The climate has chilled down quite a bit to regulate carcinogens. We're back to square one," Albert said.—MARJORIE SUN

Handler Receives Medal of Science

Philip Handler, who refused to allow himself to be nominated for the National Medal of Science while he was president of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), was finally bestowed the honor on 11 October. Science adviser George Keyworth and Handler's successor at the NAS, Frank Press, went to Boston to present it to Handler at the Deaconess Hospital where he has been ill since July. In announcing the award, President Reagan cited Handler's research in pellagra as well as his national leadership in furthering American science. Handler, a biochemist, was NAS president from 1969 to 1981. The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy says that additional winners of the Medal of Science will be announced presently.

—Constance Holden

Gilbert May Leave Harvard for Biogen

Biologist Walter Gilbert is taking a year's leave of absence from Harvard University that may prove to be more permanent. He is leaving to become chief executive officer of Biogen, the genetic engineering company which he helped found.

Gilbert is trying to arrange with Harvard to keep a laboratory going in his absence. But the Department of Biochemistry, at present chaired by his colleague and sometimes rival Mark Ptashne, has a rule that only full-time faculty can be members. When his year's leave is up, Gilbert will presumably have to return to the department or resign from it. He is therefore exploring with the university the possibility of keeping a laboratory attached to a different department. "If the biochemistry department doesn't want me I will be somewhere else," says Gilbert.

Starting his scientific career as a physicist, Gilbert switched to biology and won a Nobel Prize recently for co-inventing with Alan Maxam one of the two DNA rapid sequencing techniques. The move to Biogen repre-

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