

vironmentalists to lobby for a curtailment of the program, reviving the coalition that took the Clinch River breeder reactor off the budget in 1983. At first the lobby made little headway. But then the SFC leadership seemed to stumble earlier this year, choosing a new president who shortly afterwards resigned because of business conflicts. At that point the budget office at the White House made ready to foreclose on the SFC.

Nevertheless, as Robert Roach of the Environmental Policy Institute, one of the SFC's steady adversaries, points out: "They have already committed \$3.1 billion for synfuels, and the bill leaves \$3.3 billion still in the SFC. It's hard to say that spending \$6.4 billion is killing the program."

—ELIOT MARSHALL

EPA to Repair Leaks in Leaded Gasoline Rules

Conceding that attempts to cut back the use of leaded gasoline have failed, William Ruckelshaus, head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), disclosed a new plan on 30 July for sharply curtailing the use of lead in motor fuel. Two options are being considered, Ruckelshaus said: one that would result in a 91 percent reduction in leaded gasoline by 1 January 1986, and a slower approach that would phase in controls to achieve the same goal by 1988. In addition, the government may decide to impose an outright ban on leaded gasoline in 1995, by which time substitutes will be available for the small number of engines and cars (mainly pre-1971) that depend on lead as a valve lubricant.

Ruckelshaus pointed out that developing embryos as well as young children appear to be threatened by airborne lead. "The capacity of lead to impair the physical and mental health of our children, particularly those who live in the inner city, has been well documented," he said, adding that new data suggest that adverse effects "may occur at much lower levels than heretofore considered safe." He described the correlation between the lead found in human blood and lead used in gasoline as a "one-to-one relationship," the "very rare" and con-

clusive sort of evidence that makes regulators feel comfortable that the controls they seek are justified.

Eleven years ago, EPA ordered a slow "phasedown" of leaded gasoline. It was moving gradually to a conclusion when the Reagan Administration took office in 1981. Under the leadership of Anne Burford, the agency held up the rules and considered removing all controls on lead. After receiving sharp criticism from the public health community, EPA changed course in 1982 and proposed a complex new phasedown plan that set the maximum lead content in gasoline at 1.10 grams per gallon. The agency also allowed refiners to meet the standard by averaging their leaded and unleaded output.

It misfired. According to Ruckelshaus, EPA badly underestimated the amount of fuel cheating—using leaded gasoline in cars designed to take unleaded—that would occur. The present EPA estimate is that 67 percent more lead is being used than the agency had anticipated, or 35.7 billion grams per year rather than 21.4 billion. If it is not checked, misfueling could triple by 1990, accounting for 40 percent of the demand for leaded gasoline.

Illicit fuel switching has had a doubly harmful impact, according to EPA. In addition to putting lead into the atmosphere, it destroys catalytic converters on auto tail pipes, multiplying by a factor of 2 to 8 the output of hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen oxide.

Ruckelshaus proposes ending the allowance given to refiners in 1982 that permits them to average their leaded gasoline output. And he would lower the maximum lead content from 1.10 grams to 0.10 gram per gallon by 1986. Hearings on the plan are to be held on 30 and 31 August.

—ELIOT MARSHALL

U.S.—Poland Exchanges Remain Uncertain

Whether the release of political prisoners in Poland will lead rapidly to the reinstatement of scientific exchange programs between that country and the United States remains uncertain. Exchange programs between the two

countries were suspended a little more than 2 years ago when martial law was in effect in Poland and a U.S. embassy official in Warsaw was expelled from the country.

On 21 July, the Polish government approved and began to implement a plan for general amnesty for virtually all its political prisoners. Prominent among them are several scientists who have been deeply involved in the Solidarity movement and with a predecessor group known as KOR (*Science*, 13 Jan., p. 145). President Reagan has said that freeing such prisoners was a necessary step before he would consider lifting any of the U.S. sanctions against Poland. Officials at the State Department suggest that the current delay, for what seems like a certain move to reinstate the scientific exchange programs, is due to an internal debate at the White House over what other sanctions should be lifted.—JEFFREY L. FOX

Comings and Goings

Two federal agencies recently acquired controversial new chiefs. President Reagan on 3 July appointed **Donald Ian MacDonald** as director of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration and on 23 July named **Robert A. Rowland** as head of the Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Critics have argued that neither appointee has administrative experience in government or the expertise required for the posts. MacDonald is a Florida pediatrician best known for his crusade against adolescent drug abuse. Rowland, a lawyer, managed Reagan's 1980 election campaign in Texas. The appointments are likely to go unchallenged on Capitol Hill, however, because they were made while Congress was away on recess. By law, this means that the appointees are not required to be confirmed by the Senate until the next session of Congress begins.

Dominick P. Purpura, who in June announced his intention to step down as dean of Stanford University School of Medicine, has landed another deanship, this one at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Purpura takes office on 1 September.

—MARJORIE SUN