

Congress Passes Reforms in Pesticide Law

The Senate this week passed major reforms to the nation's pesticide law that would accelerate the safety review of old pesticides and stop payment of federal money to makers of banned pesticides.

The bill, which had already won House approval, now goes to President Reagan for signature, whose approval is expected.

Proposals to change the pesticide law, known by its acronym FIFRA, have been mired in political controversy for several years. This time around, Congress settled on a stripped down version of earlier proposals that was eventually dubbed "FIFRA-lite."

The bill would speed up the evaluation of about 600 active ingredients in pesticides that have been marketed for years, but never have been rigorously tested for their impact on health or the environment. The review program has been limping along at the EPA, in part because of lack of funding.

The bill would require the agency to finish the safety evaluations in 9 years. (There is no deadline under current law.) It would generate more money for the program by imposing an annual fee on manufacturers for registering a pesticide product. Since there are about 50,000 pesticide products on the market and manufacturers would pay \$425 annually for registering each one, the fees would raise about \$180 million during the 9-year program.

The legislation also would halt indemnification to manufacturers of pesticides canceled by EPA, relieving the agency of a costly rule. Under current law, when EPA suspends or cancels a pesticide, the agency, out of its own budget, is required to compensate a maker of the pesticide for unused stock and assume responsibility for the stock's disposal. To store and dispose of the four pesticides that qualify for indemnification—EDB, dinoseb, 2,4,5-T, and Silvex—could cost EPA up to \$200 million, agency officials have estimated. The EPA pesticide program's annual budget is about \$60 million.

Critics say the indemnification rule has discouraged the agency from banning pesticides knowing that it would have to compensate manufacturers and pay out a lot of money itself to store and get rid of the chemicals.

The new legislation virtually stops the flow of indemnification money from the federal government to the chemical companies. The only group that would be compen-

Trivelpiece to Leave AAAS

AAAS executive officer Alvin W. Trivelpiece announced on 30 September that he has accepted an offer to head the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and become a vice president of Martin Marietta Energy Systems, Inc., which manages the lab under contract to the Department of Energy (DOE). He will assume his new post on 1 January. Trivelpiece, an electrical engineer, served as director of DOE's office of energy research from 1981 until April 1987 when he came to AAAS. His selection as director of Oak Ridge marks the conclusion of an 8-month search. Martin Marietta president Clyde C. Hopkins said in a statement that Trivelpiece's "strong scientific and engineering credentials will ensure commitment to high standards within the laboratory, and his personal character and leadership will provide new direction for Oak Ridge."

The AAAS has established a search committee to select a new executive officer. It is chaired by AAAS board president Walter E. Massey, vice president for research and for Argonne National Laboratory, the University of Chicago. Philip H. Abelson, science adviser to AAAS and former editor of *Science*, has been named acting executive officer.

■ BARBARA J. CULLITON

sated are mainly farmers who have unused inventory of the banned pesticide. It would take an act of Congress to reimburse distributors or manufacturers, which is likely to be rarely. The money would now come from a special Treasury Department fund, not EPA.

The new bill also shifts the responsibility for storage and disposal of canceled pesticides from EPA to the registrant. The agency, however, would have the authority to oversee the disposal methods.

A host of other major proposed changes did not survive the legislative process, including language that would have toughened ground-water regulations; extended the patent term for pesticides to make up for the time manufacturers lose going through EPA's regulatory safety review to register products; and protected farmers from liability for environmental damage from pesticides that were applied according to the manufacturers' labeling requirements.

Janet Hathaway, an attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington, D.C., said that the passage of the bill represented "a vital first step towards a rational pesticide program."

■ MARJORIE SUN

Breuning Pleads Guilty

Psychologist Stephen E. Breuning pleaded guilty in federal district court in Baltimore on 19 September to two counts of submitting falsified research results in applying for more than \$200,000 in grants he received from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

In return, prosecutor E. Thomas Roberts, agreed to drop a third charge that Breuning tried to obstruct an NIMH investigation into the validity of his research.

Breuning, 36, became prominent in the mid-1980s with his findings that the stimulant drugs Ritalin and Dexedrine can be more effective in controlling hyperactive behavior in retarded children than the tranquilizers then in wide use. His NIMH-funded work widely influenced the field, and several states modified their regulations on treatment of these children to be consistent with Breuning's work.

Breuning, who will be sentenced in November, faces up to 10 years in prison and \$20,000 in fines for falsifying those findings. Court papers show that few children supposedly treated actually received either drug, that the research was never done as described in the grant applications, and that the results he claimed had not actually been obtained.

In sentencing, U.S. District Judge Frank A. Kaufman may also bar Breuning from receiving federal research funds for 10 years and require him to pay the University of Pittsburgh \$20,000 for each of the 4 years he worked and supposedly conducted the studies there.

The university has already reimbursed NIMH for the costs of lab equipment and salaries for Breuning's research assistants under the NIMH grant, a total of some \$163,000.

The unraveling of Breuning's career began in December 1983, when Robert L. Sprague, a researcher at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, questioned Breuning's findings on tardive dyskinesia in patients at the Coldwater Regional Center in Michigan. Sprague had taken Breuning