

Environment

Administrator Anne M. Gorsuch was out of town so it fell to comptroller Morgan Kinghorn to announce the Environmental Protection Agency's bare bones budget for fiscal 1983. The cuts were slightly larger than advance figures circulated by individuals who have been alarmed at the fate of the agency under an Administration that so far has demonstrated little interest in environmental protection.

The total operating budget requested is \$961.3 million, down from Reagan's revised 1982 budget of \$1.086 billion. Compared with the 1981 budget of \$1.3 billion, and adjusting for inflation, this amounts to about a 40 percent cut in EPA's purchasing power at a time when the agency's work load should be doubling, according to critics.

In announcing the proposals, EPA officials stated that the big priorities for next year are capital expenditures for the Superfund for cleaning up old hazardous waste dumps, for which \$230 million has been requested for the third year of this 5-year program; the other big expenditure is a requested \$2.4 billion for sewage treatment construction grants to the states. Both of these are outside the operating budget.

All EPA's research, monitoring, and enforcement programs are to be cut; \$184 million has been requested for air quality (down from \$220 million for 1982); and \$186 million for water quality (a \$51 million cut). A \$4 million reduction to \$103 million is requested for the Resources Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), dealing with existing hazardous waste facilities, for which implementation is beginning this year. For implementation of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), \$78 million (a \$9 million reduction from 1982) is requested. The pesticides program is to be reduced \$3 million to \$51 million.

As for enforcement, consolidation of activities is to lead to a budget of \$88 million, down from \$104 million. Grants to states are to undergo a decrease to \$182 million, reflecting an accelerating decline from the peak funding year of 1979—this despite the fact that a theme of this year's presentation was the need to turn over monitoring and enforcement functions to the states.

EPA officials held fast to the line that the reductions will not impair the agency's functioning, but will actually lead to improved efficiencies. They said this would be possible through extensive "streamlining" of procedures as well as increased "flexibility" in the form of

reduced reporting requirements and less detailed federal overviews.

Money for research and development in all program areas is being reduced in the request from \$270 million in 1982 to \$207 million in 1983. The largest single research cut is on the abatement of pollution from "futuristic" energy technologies, particularly synthetic fuels.

The object of EPA's R & D program, budget documents explain, will be to improve the scientific credibility of regulations and supply data directly relevant to regulatory needs, including the need for "less burdensome regulatory strategies." Documents explain that many research programs, such as test methods development for analyzing toxic substances, have been completed.

As for personnel, a reduction from this year's total of 9281 employees to 8645 in 1983 is still planned. However, owing to a last minute reallocation of \$16 million, no firings are planned in 1983 and no further reductions in force are anticipated in 1984. Although EPA's attrition rate has been reported as having doubled, Kinghorn reported at the briefing that in fact it has been no higher this fiscal year than the "historical" rate of about 100 a month.

Despite official assurances, environmentalists are so worried about the apparent dismantling of the agency that the National Wildlife Federation has sponsored the preparation of an alternative budget for EPA, compiled by a team of analysts headed by former EPA assistant administrator William Drayton. The NWF analysis states that an adequate 1983 budget for the agency would be more like \$2.18 billion. It calls for program budgets that are in most cases two to three times the Administration's requests. It points out that the control of toxic substances, which has been added by Congress to most of the basic environmental protection laws, requires major additions in both personnel and money. For example, implementation of RCRA, it says, will require \$347 million. Implementation of TSCA, says NWF, requires \$255 million as opposed to the requested \$69 million.

Democrats in Congress appear to be getting mobilized to defend EPA. The week before the budget was unveiled, members of the House held a press conference to publicize the NWF budget. House speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill (D-Mass.) accused the Administration of "breaking a century of bipartisanship" by engaging in an attempt to "repeal indirectly laws that the Administration knows the public would never allow to be repealed."—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

A French Connection in High Tech for LDC's

The French government will underwrite the establishment in Paris of a world center devoted to the application of information technology to education and training in both the industrial and less developed countries (LDC's). President François Mitterrand has given his personal backing to the project, which stems from the ideas of author-politician Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, who will serve as chairman of the center.

Some of the aims of the center, according to remarks by Servan-Schreiber quoted in the 29 January *Le Monde*, are to develop a new personal computer; to serve as a base for pilot programs in LDC's utilizing electronic technology which the French call *micro-informatique*; and to conduct "social experimentation" to benefit the young, the unemployed, and the aged.

The project fits in well with the socialist government's declared intentions in foreign policy of closer cooperation with LDC's and its stress in domestic affairs on the importance of the use of computers to shape social and economic change. In addition, the center should provide a boost for the French in high technology competition with Japan and the United States.

The center has already achieved an international dimension, notably through the enlistment of two highly regarded M.I.T. faculty members in leading roles. Nicholas Negroponte, a professor of computer graphics at M.I.T., has been named first director of the center and Seymour Papert, a professor of education and mathematics at M.I.T. and former research colleague of French psychologist Jean Piaget, will serve as chief scientist. Both have applied for leaves of absence from M.I.T.; their association with the center at this point represents individual initiatives and not an institutional link.

Servan-Schreiber is probably best known as former editor of the news magazine *l'Express* and author of *The American Challenge*, the book that sparked debate in the mid-1960's on the so-called "technology gap" between Europe and the United States. His briefly successful career in national politics put him at the center-right of

the political spectrum. The new center reportedly evolved from a proposal, in his recent book *The World Challenge*, for a partnership of industrialized countries, OPEC nations, and less developed countries devoted to adapting the electronics revolution to the needs of the Third World.

The French government will support the center at a level of \$20 million annually and additional funds from OPEC countries and other sources will be sought. Details of the center remain unsettled. Despite its friends in high places, the center was apparently launched without much consultation with the French scientific and political bureaucracies and Servan-Schreiber & Co. could face something of a challenge from the mandarins.

—John Walsh

Committee Votes to Keep DNA Rules Mandatory

A National Institutes of Health (NIH) committee overwhelmingly recommended on 8 February that federal guidelines on recombinant DNA research be kept mandatory but that some of the current rules be moderately relaxed. The vote of 16 to 5 represented a change of heart by the Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee. In September, the committee approved a plan that would have made the rules voluntary, but most of the public comment that followed opposed the change for a variety of reasons. The voluntary guidelines were originally drafted by David Baltimore of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Allan Campbell of Stanford.

The passage of the plan to keep the federal guidelines mandatory resolves a fundamental issue that the committee has discussed for 2 years. The new regulations, which were proposed by NIH researcher Susan Gottesman and published in the *Federal Register* on 7 December, would be binding for all institutions receiving NIH funding. Industry is expected to abide by the new guidelines as it has the current regulations.

Under the Gottesman proposal, restrictions will be loosened on the special handling of some experimental organisms but not to the degree that Baltimore and Campbell had pro-

posed. It also would permit researchers to conduct certain experiments previously prohibited. The new mandatory plan must be approved by the acting NIH director.—Marjorie Sun

Harvard, Washington U. Share \$115 Million

Harvard and Washington University in St. Louis will share what is said to be the largest single benefaction so far to institutions of higher education—\$115 million. Harvard will get \$77 million and Washington University about \$38 million from sale of Mallinckrodt, Inc., stock willed by Edward Mallinckrodt, Jr., to the universities 15 years ago. The buyer is Avon Products, which is taking over the St. Louis-based chemicals and health products company.

The stock has been held in a trust administered by directors of Mallinckrodt. Under terms of the will, control of the stock was transferred to the universities in January.

The sale of stock will not have a dramatic impact on the universities' operating budgets since they have been receiving dividend income from almost 2.5 million shares of stock since the bequest. Avon is paying \$50 a share for the stock, which totals 17 percent of Mallinckrodt's outstanding stock. Both universities plan to add the proceeds from the stock sale to their endowments.

As required by the will, income from the stock has been earmarked at both universities for the support of science and medicine. At Harvard, the funds have been used to help underwrite activities in the disciplines of chemistry, physics, and geophysics as well as medicine. At Washington, the funds have been directed into biomedical research. It is not clear whether the will's requirement that the funds be used in specific fields is still binding. Washington University officials have indicated that they will continue to follow the wishes of the donor expressed in the will.

The largest previous direct gift in higher education is thought to be that of Coca-Cola stock valued at approximately \$100 million to Emory University from retired Coca-Cola company chairman Robert W. Woodruff in 1979.—John Walsh

NAS Building Independent Study Capacity

The National Academy of Sciences, under the leadership of Frank Press, is getting private foundations to donate to a fund that will allow the academy much more latitude to initiate its own studies, independent of the vagaries of government sponsorship.

So far, foundations have committed \$1.5 million over the next 3 to 5 years for the fund. According to the NAS executive officer Philip M. Smith, three initiatives are already under way: an exploration of arms control measures, being conducted by a team from the Soviet Academy of Sciences and a team headed by Marvin Goldberger of the California Institute of Technology; a committee looking at ways to enhance healthy competition among industrialized nations; and a committee on government-university relations.

Smith says the academy is also laying plans for establishment of a corporate affiliates program, that would offer industry a closer acquaintance with science policy issues through special seminars, briefings, and reports. Fees from the corporate subscribers would also be made available for academy-initiated studies.

—Constance Holden

Arkansas Declines Appeal of Ruling on Creationism

The attorney general of Arkansas has decided not to appeal a federal court ruling against the state's controversial "creation-science" law. Steven Clark told a press conference on 4 February that the state had little chance of winning.

The law, which was declared to be unconstitutional, would have required the teaching of biblical views on evolution in public schools (*Science*, 29 January, p. 484). "I'll tell you what the insurmountable problem is," Clark said. "That's the law itself," which he described as having, in part, "uniquely religious overtures."

"There will be a better day and a better time on this issue," he added. "I think a bill can be drafted that does meet constitutional standards."

—R. Jeffrey Smith