

that challenges the constitutionality of the law, brought by the ACLU and others, is still moving forward, albeit at a snail's pace. "The ACLU case has been on hold, pending the outcome of the creationist case," she said. "Our expectation now is that it will move forward." If the law is judged to be unconstitutional, as was the case with a creationist law in Arkansas, similar legislative moves by creationists are likely to come to a halt.

—William J. Broad

## Gorsuch Strikes Back at EPA Critics

Anne Gorsuch, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), recently added her name to the long list of officials who blame their troubles with the public on reporting by the news media. In a speech to the National Press Club on 29 June, Gorsuch said that "reading press accounts of my motives and performance . . . has been like viewing my reflection in a fun-house mirror."

She said that "the operating theory seems to be that Anne Gorsuch is out to destroy the agency, and in the process to threaten our natural resources. . . . Let me propose to you a countertheory. Anne Gorsuch is personally and professionally committed to protecting the environment; to do this she must make EPA more efficient."

Gorsuch said that she has cut the agency's budget by only 17 percent since 1981, not 50 percent as some critics (whom she declined to name) have maintained. The size of EPA's staff has shrunk only 19 percent in the same period, she said. "We are doing it principally through attrition," not wholesale firings, she explained.

"As for the brain drain, I invite you to gauge for yourself the quality of our current staff," Gorsuch said. Many of her top appointees are attorneys, former lobbyists, or former spokesmen for corporations regulated by EPA. For example, Rita Lavelle, the EPA assistant administrator for solid wastes, has an undergraduate minor in chemistry and came to EPA from a public relations job with a company cited by EPA for violating its hazardous waste rules. One prospective ap-

pointee, James Sanderson, recently withdrew from consideration for the agency's third highest post after becoming embroiled in conflict-of-interest charges. "We have lost some good people, just as the agency has moved people in and out over its entire history, but we have replaced employees in key positions with others of equal excellence," Gorsuch said.

One rumor that Gorsuch sought to squelch is that "EPA is no longer concerned with enforcement." Not true, she said. The enforcement staff has declined only 15 percent. And a precipitous drop in the number of enforcement cases is caused not by disinterest, but rather by a desire to put more time into case preparation,



Anne Gorsuch

"so that when cases go to [the Department of] Justice for prosecution, they will hold up in court."

Gorsuch was asked to reconcile a stated interest in improving the agency's scientific research with sharp reductions in research funds and the termination of studies on some new forms of pollution. "Those people who feel that quality of research is a function of ever-expanding federal budgets—those people I can't communicate with. Our emphasis is on quality, not on the amount of money we can spend."

Gorsuch was also asked about charges that she improperly advised representatives of a small fuel refiner, the Thriftway Company of New Mexico, to increase the amount of lead in their gasoline without fear of EPA sanctions. "It was not the case, it would not be the case, and still isn't the case regardless of the allegations" that she broke the law during her meeting with Thriftway, Gorsuch said. "Therefore I had no consideration of resigning" in the wake of public reports about it.

—R. Jeffrey Smith

## Agencies in Dispute over Cancer Policy

A dispute over the regulation of carcinogens in general and formaldehyde in particular is brewing between senior officials in two federal agencies concerned with occupational safety and health.

The dispute, which has so far taken the form of an exchange of increasingly blunt letters, centers on the question of whether regulatory action should be taken only when there is direct evidence that a substance is carcinogenic to humans.

Mark Cowan, deputy assistant secretary of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), recently stated that such evidence is required before OSHA takes regulatory action (*Science*, 2 July, p. 35). That opinion has now been challenged by J. Donald Millar, director of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, who told Cowan in a letter dated 15 June that such a policy "is bad news indeed for those who are interested in preventing work-related cancer."

OSHA's refusal so far to regulate exposure to formaldehyde lies at the heart of this exchange between Millar and Cowan. Formaldehyde, in the opinion of many scientists, represents the clearest example of a potential human carcinogen that should be regulated but has not been by the Environmental Protection Agency or OSHA under the Reagan Administration. Earlier this year, Millar pointed out that the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research in Cancer had judged formaldehyde to be a potential human carcinogen, and in his latest letter he argued that this means the chemical "must be regarded as if it were a human carcinogen." Millar described Cowan's interpretation of the cancer agency's guidelines as "too narrow."

If OSHA indeed requires "evidence of cancer in humans" before taking regulatory action, it is particularly "bad news" for the estimated 1.6 million workers "potentially at risk from exposure to formaldehyde," Millar argued. A spokesman for Cowan said a reply would be sent to Millar shortly.

—Marjorie Sun