

Congressional Calendar

FLASH! In a surprise move, the House of Representatives defeated President Carter's request for emergency fuel rationing powers. See details in William Engdahl's Energy Column, page 62.

Emergency Gas Rationing Passes Senate

The Senate on May 9 passed President Carter's gasoline rationing program, with the House expected to follow suit the next day, hours before the final deadline for passage. The measure was desperately sought by the Carter Administration as the legal authority under which it can go forward with mass population control programs and crisis management of the economy. The opposition is fighting the measure with demands that more of the "scarce" gasoline go to the large western states, rather than to the more densely populated east. Opponents are thus playing right into the population manipulation scenarios that the Carter Administration intends to implement.

The bill was voted down in the Senate Energy Committee earlier in the week by a vote of 9 to 7, after which President Carter stepped in with a compromise plan to allocate rationed gasoline on the basis of a state's previous usage. Then claiming he had gotten a fair share for his state, Senator Frank Church (D-Idaho), one of the key figures involved in

the entire crisis management gameplan, switched his no vote and the measure passed the committee. Senator James McClure (R-Idaho), a lone voice in the Senate, has been openly attacking Energy Secretary James Schlesinger for deliberately creating a gasoline shortage to force passage of the rationing scheme. McClure first aired his charges in a Senate Energy hearing April 26 and intended to bring it up again at a hearing May 8 in the Appropriations Committee with DOE official David Bardin. "They just create a shortage so they can get the rationing passed," declared a Senate aide close to the Senator. Senator Bennett Johnston (D-La) has decided to call hearings on the entire gasoline supply-and-demand issue after McClure's charges. They are set for May 21 in the Senate Energy Committee.

Anti-Nuclear legislation proliferates

As part of his concerted attack on the nuclear industry, Senator Gary Hart (D-Colo) introduced an amendment to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission authorization bill this week that no new nuclear plants are to be licensed without a guarantee that the state in which the plant is sited has a full evacuation plan ready. Hart's proposal makes clear that the entire nuclear energy crisis issue is being used not only to destroy a very necessary energy source, but to prepare the country for crisis control man-

agement. The Hart amendment also demands greater NRC powers in the event of a nuclear plant emergency, in order for the new licenses to be issued.

On the House side, Congressman Morris Udall (D-Ariz) is pursuing the antinuclear attack in conjunction with Hart. The House Interior Committee on May 9 endorsed a six-month moratorium on new nuclear plant construction beginning Oct. 1 and the issue now goes to the House floor. Udall is planning a series of hearings beginning May 21 on the safety, licensing and security within nuclear plants.

Congressman pursues synthetic fuels production on National Security grounds

Using rhetoric that ensuring "U.S. energy supplies is a crucial, national security issue" (in the words of one aide), Congressman William Moorhead (D-Pa.) has introduced an amendment to the Defense Production Act of 1950 that sets a five-year goal in which 500,000 barrels of oil a day used by the military would be replaced with such inefficient and expensive energy sources as solid wastes, coal gas and oil shale. The Defense Production Act expires this year, and in the process of renewing it Moorhead has declared that U.S. preparedness necessitates having adequate fuels independent of oil suppliers. The second part of Moorhead's proposal is to provide

\$2 billion of taxpayer money to ensure high price guarantees for these ridiculous products. The House Banking Committee voted up Moorhead's amendment on May 8 and the floor of the House is expected to review the bill by this summer. Another amendment to the Act declares that in a worst case situation, where it is a necessity for the country to have synthetic fuels, the President is authorized to establish government owned plants. Once the House completes action on this measure, there will probably be a conference committee with the Senate, because as of now no one has offered a similar amendment there.

Battle rages for Alaskan lands

The economic future of Alaska is on the line May 11 as final debate begins on the House floor on the Alaskan lands question. Congressman Morris Udall, taking time out from his anti-nuclear energy activities, has introduced a bill that would set aside 69 million acres of Alaska as wilderness, and thus be unavailable for economic development. Udall's bill is a version of the better known Huckaby bill H.R. 2199, a poor compromise bill on the question that would set aside an enormous 50.7 million acres as wilderness. A third version of this legislation called the Breux bill sets aside 55 million acres. Debate is expected to last several

days, with a close vote endorsing the Udall bill. If either of the two other proposals are passed, the Carter Administration has already declared them unacceptable and indicated a likely veto. This would mean the presidential land-grab of last year would stay in effect. On the basis of existing law Carter caused 121 million acres of mineral and lumber-rich land to be set aside for National Monuments classification or for study as possible wildlife areas.

What is at stake in this debate is trillions of dollars worth of mineral resources accessible to exploitation through existing technology. The Alaskan landmass, a continuation of the mineral-rich Rocky Mountains, is an enormously rich mineral area and as the oil discoveries at Prudhoe Bay indicate, rich in oil as well. Millions of acres of badly needed minerals and other resources may go untapped to protect the bald eagle population at Admiralty Island National Monument and the caribou at the Arctic National Wildlife Range if a strong conservationist bill is voted up.

Corporations under fire from Metzenbaum

Senator Howard

(Ohio) will introduce legislation in about six weeks that will set up mechanisms for control over and major watergatings of corporations and their executives. The bill will do such things as set standards

for the way in which a corporate board of directors member can conduct business, require that a majority of corporate directors be from outside the corporation, and that outside audit committees over a corporation be established. At the same time the bill will establish outside nominating committees and compensation boards to pick and pay the corporate directors. "There is not much of a question that stockholders are appalled" with the improper activities of corporations, declared Metzenbaum. As one of his aides put it, "We want democratization of the corporate governance process and accountability of the corporations." Metzenbaum claims that investors are selling their stocks and forcing the stock market down because of their great dissatisfaction with corporate leadership. Over a year ago Metzenbaum appointed a committee of business, labor and consumers that has advised him on ways to "make the nation's large corporations more responsive to their stockholders and to the public at large." Metzenbaum plans extensive hearings on the entire issue of corporate accountability.

—Barbara Dreyfuss