

## **Congressional Calendar** by Barbara Dreyfuss and Susan Kokinda

### **Fusion without funding introduced**

Legislation to mandate the building of a demonstration-model magnetic confinement fusion reactor was introduced in the Senate on July 2. But the legislation contains no additional funds for the fiscal year 1981 Department of Energy budget. The chief sponsor, Sen. Paul Tsongas (D-Mass.) and his co-sponsors, who include Frank Church (D-Id.), is apparently introducing the legislation this session to achieve a political mandate to push ahead with increased funding for the FY 1982 budget.

The legislation basically incorporates the findings of the Buxbaum Commission, an advisory panel established by the Department of Energy, which recommended during the last half of June that the fusion budget be massively increased. The panel stated that the only thing holding fusion back was the level of money in the program and that a working reactor could be developed by 1990 and a demonstration model would be in place by the year 2005.

The legislation and the panel findings are less ambitious than the program outlined by Rep. Mike McCormack (D-Wa.), who earlier this year introduced legislation which provided the funding to achieve a working demonstration model no later than 2000. McCormack and a group of private experts assembled by him feel that with an Apollo-style approach to fusion development. A target date of 1995 for a demonstration model is eminently feasible.

Other Senate co-sponsors of the Tsongas legislation include Republicans Peter Dominici (N.M.) and Minority Leader Howard Baker

(Tn.), and Democrats Harrison Williams and Bill Bradley, both of New Jersey where the Princeton tokamak reactor is located.

### **Senator attacks banking dereg committee**

Sen. Robert Morgan (D-N.C.), one of the few Senators who opposed the sweeping Federal Depository Institutions Deregulation Act, came out with a sharp attack on the Deregulation Advisory Committee established by the act to implement its provisions. In a statement delivered on the floor of the Senate June 28, he attacked recent decisions by the committee which have further hurt the already-staggering savings and loan, and home-building industries and called for Congressional oversight over the actions of the committee.

At issue are actions which have decreased the funds flowing into savings banks while increasing the home mortgage rates. Morgan stated, "In short, the deregulation committee's actions do not seem to conform with the intention of Congress. They have not acted in an orderly or gradual fashion and the committee has ignored the fact that savings and loans have not caught up with commercial banks in developing the new powers afforded them. S&L's are still suffering from high interest money costs and this year alone will see a \$40 billion decline in mortgage lending. . . . Not only do I question the actions by the committee, I also am concerned about its determination in light of the composition of the deregulation committee. Only one member of the committee, Jay Janis of the Home Loan Bank Board,

represents a clear voice for savings and loans and homebuilding."

Morgan points out that the League of Savings and Loan Banks has sued Federal Reserve Board Chairman Volcker and the deregulation committee for violations of the deregulation act, which gave a six-year period for equalization of bank interest rates—which the committee accomplished in six weeks, thereby dooming the housing industry.

Morgan concluded by stating, "in previous postwar recessions, homebuilding has been the force leading us out of the economic slowdown. This time, however, following the actions of the deregulation committee, there is no guarantee that we can count on the housing sector for its strong upward drawing power."

### **Senate restores revenue sharing funds**

The Senate voted 55 to 36 June 27 to restore \$572.1 million to the revenue sharing funds for the fiscal 1980 budget. The money for the supplemental appropriations bill had been taken out of the budget by the Senate Appropriations Committee. The action was taken by some of the staunchest budget cutters, especially many Republicans. The challenge on the Appropriations Committee cuts was raised by Sen. Lowell Weicker (D-Conn.).

Other supplemental appropriations voted up at the same time included \$9.7 million for the Garrison Diversion Project, an irrigation system of lakes and canals in North Dakota. Also \$50 million was restored for the Tennessee-Tombig-

bee Waterway, a project critical for transporting goods destined for export down the Tennessee River.

The Carter administration had hoped to phase out the entire revenue sharing program by next year. The appropriations will now have to be reconciled with the version passed by the House.

## Senate demands quality army

The Senate voted late on July 1 to demand that the Army ensure high quality personnel. By a vote of 89 to 0 the Senate adopted an amendment that calls for 68 percent of Army inductees to be high school graduates. At the same time it requires the armed forces to ensure that no more than 25 percent of inductees are of the lowest aptitude category possible for being inducted. This figure will be 20 percent for each service after the first year.

"There is a heavy burden now on the Department of Defense to do this," declared a staff member closely involved in ensuring the passage of this amendment. "It says that the Senate doesn't want anything but a quality army."

The amendment became part of the fiscal 1981 procurement bill, which provides \$51.9 billion to develop and manufacture weapons. The original proposal by the Senate Armed Services Committee, which had been authored by Senator Nunn (D-Ga.) had called for a cut of 25,000 men from the Army, and a provision that the cut could only be restored based on the number of high school graduates inducted each year by the Army. Nunn proposed that the Army should have a base line of 52 percent high school

graduates inducted yearly and for every one percent above that recruited, the Army would be allowed to increase its strength by 1,250 people.

Armed Services Committee chairman John Stennis (D-Miss.) portrayed the cut of 25,000 soldiers as the last chance to rescue the All-Volunteer Army. Senator Nunn argued that reducing the size of the army would enable it to put more stress on quality in its recruiting and less on meeting monthly quotas for volunteers. Senator Hollings (D-S.C.) said that Nunn, who had earlier accused Army leaders of covering up the true state of the armed forces, had overreacted to the coverup. "Once you get the suspicion of coverup . . . you probably overreact. I'm convinced it was as much an overreaction as an insidious plot to hurry up the draft."

A move to table a motion to overturn the committee's recommendations was voted down by a vote of 69 to 22. At that point Senator Nunn sat down with Senators Levin (D-Mich), Hollings (D-S.C.), Dole (R-Kan.) and others who opposed the troop cut, and forged the compromise agreement. The measure now goes to conference committee as the House version of the bill did not have amendments on the quality of the armed forces.

## House cuts Exim funds

The U.S. Export-Import Bank could be without meaningful funding unless Congressional leaders can fulfill their pledge to restore funds cut from a foreign aid bill on July 3 to hasten its passage. Late at night July 3, just before the holiday recess, \$355 million for the Eximbank was deleted in the rush to

approve the \$16.9 billion foreign aid appropriation.

The Eximbank funds were part of a \$528 million package that was drastically reduced by the House, where Republican leaders argued that the appropriation should have been part of a separate appropriations bill. That bill had cleared a House-Senate conference committee last February, but was kept off the floor of the House by Democratic leaders, who feared it would be defeated.

## Up penalties for pot traffickers?

Sen. Lawton Chiles (D-Fl.) has introduced legislation into the Senate which would vastly increase the penalties on convicted major marijuana traffickers. Currently the penalty for trafficking in over 1,000 pounds of marijuana is a maximum of five years in prison and a fine of no more than \$50,000. Conviction on a second offense could double the sentence and fine.

Chiles' legislation would increase the penalty on a first-term conviction to a maximum of 15 years in jail and a maximum of \$125,000 fine. A second conviction could bring up to 30 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Identical legislation was passed by the House during mid-June as a rider sponsored by Billy Lee Evans (D-Ga.) to a noncontroversial infant formula safety bill. Chiles plans to use the same strategy, attaching his proposals to the same bill in the Senate, S. 2490, which is expected to be marked up and out of committee by the time the Senate returns from the July 4 recess. Passage is likely.