

## EPA STOPS DISCHARGE OF OIL AND GAS WELL POLLUTANTS

### From Environmental Protection Agency

■(WASHINGTON) Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol M. Browner increased protection to public health and the coastal waters along the Gulf of Mexico and Cook Inlet, Alaska, by requiring coastal oil and gas production facilities to stop pollutant discharges into the Gulf of Mexico and reduce such discharges into Cook Inlet, eliminating nearly two billion pounds of contaminants that annually reach these waters.

## INTERNATIONAL TEAMS REVIEW VERIFICATION MEASURES AT DOE SITES

### From U.S. Dept. of Energy

■(WASHINGTON) The United States has joined with the Russian Federation and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in a new initiative aimed at increasing the international verification of weapons-usable nuclear materials. The purpose of the initiative is to verify that fissile materials no longer needed for U.S. and Russian defense purposes are not reused to produce new nuclear weapons. As the first step in the initiative, representatives from Russia and the IAEA visited three Department of Energy sites this week.

The delegations visited Argonne National Laboratory-West in Idaho on Nov. 4 for demonstrations of remote monitoring technology. They visited the Hanford Site in Washington state on Nov. 5 and the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site in Colorado on Nov. 6-7. The visits to Hanford and Rocky Flats focused on how IAEA inspections have been carried out at those sites to verify that excess plutonium at those sites is not reused for weapons.

Following the site visits, the Russian and IAEA delegations will travel to Washington, D.C., for meetings on Nov. 8 with senior U.S. officials to discuss how to proceed in carrying out the trilateral initiative.

Secretary of Energy Hazel R. O'Leary, Russian Minister of Atomic Energy Viktor Mikhailov and IAEA Director General Hans Blix announced the trilateral initiative in September at the IAEA's 40th General Conference in Vienna, Austria. The initiative, which will result in a joint report by June 1997, advances the commitments made by Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin to ensure the transparency of nuclear arms reductions and the control of fissile material removed from weapons.

Browner said, "This action will fully protect the sensitive environment of these coastal waters and reduce Americans' exposure to cancer-causing pollutants in our oceans and beaches."

Under a final Clean Water Act rule, Browner set limits for pollutants discharged into coastal waters from oil and gas production facilities along the Gulf of Mexico and Cook Inlet, Alaska, the last two remaining U. S. coastal areas receiving such discharges. These limitations are expected to reduce current discharges of toxic pollutants, including arsenic, cadmium and lead, by more than two hundred thousand pounds per year; conventional pollutants, such as oil, grease and solids, by approximately 2.8 million pounds per year; and non-conventional pollutants, such as chlorides, ammonia, and aluminum, by approximately 1.5 billion pounds per year. The major waste streams being limited are

produced water, drilling fluids and drill cuttings. EPA is conducting additional studies on discharges from Cook Inlet before any additional action is considered.

At the same time under the rule, Browner incorporated into federal law state issued zero-discharge standards already in place for such facilities along the California, Florida and Alabama coasts and along the North Slope of Alaska.

EPA estimates that total annual costs of the final rule are \$16.2 million. State and federal permitting authorities will work with individual facilities to establish schedules for compliance, studies and interim controls. The "Final Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for the Coastal Subcategory of the Oil and Gas Extraction Point Source Category" was signed Oct. 31 and will be published in the Federal Register within the next few weeks.

## PUBLIC LAW 480 COUNTRY ALLOCATIONS ANNOUNCED

### From U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

■(WASHINGTON) The U.S. Department of Agriculture this week announced preliminary fiscal year 1997 allocations of \$205.0 million for 21 countries to cover commodity financing extended under Title I of the Food for Peace Program (Public Law 480), and commodity grants under the Food for Progress Program, funded by Title I appropriations.

According to Christopher E. Goldthwait, general sales manager for USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, this week's announced allocations reflect a P.L. 480 program level for fiscal year 1997 of \$226.9 million for concessional credit financing, and \$13.9 million for ocean freight differential costs associated with cargo preference requirements. The commodity allocations reflect current market conditions, particularly for feed grains and soybeans.

"Situations can develop that cause a change in allocations during the fiscal year, so these allocations do not necessarily represent final U.S. commitments to participating governments or private entities," Goldthwait said.

Title I of the Food for Peace Program is a concessional sales program to promote exports of agricultural commodities from the United States and to foster broad-based sustainable development in recipient countries. The program provides export financing over payment periods of up to 30 years, low interest rates, and maximum grace periods on payments of principal of up to five years.

Private entities, including agricultural trade organizations, are authorized to participate in the program.

Countries eligible for the Title I program are those developing countries experiencing a shortage of foreign exchange earnings and difficulty meeting all of their food needs through commercial channels. The factors that determine priorities for country allocations include food needs, potential for becoming a commercial U.S. market, and likely improvement of food security through agricultural projects and economic measures. The allocations take into account changing economic and foreign policy situations, market development opportunities, existence of adequate storage facilities, and possible disincentives to local production.

The Food for Progress program is an independently authorized program that may be funded with Title I monies. This program is used to support countries that have made commitments to introduce or expand free enterprise elements in their agricultural economies. Elements may involve commodity pricing, marketing, input availability, distribution, and private sector involvement. Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, and Tajikistan are the countries currently expected to receive commodity donations through this program.

*"Originality is the art of concealing your sources."*

*Anonymous*