

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

### **Tenn-Tom, Clinch River finally approved**

The 1982 Energy and Water Appropriations bill received final approval by the House on Nov. 20. The Senate followed suit the next day. Included in the appropriations bill was \$189 million for the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, a 232-mile navigation channel that would connect much of the Southeast with the Gulf of Mexico. Tenn-Tom will establish the infrastructure for the industrial development of one of the country's poorest areas, the region where Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee join.

The project, already two-thirds complete, has continually been a target of the environmentalists and the population-control lobby because it would foster industrial expansion and thus population growth. The 1982 appropriation will provide enough funds to complete 80 percent of the project, which congressional supporters of the waterway hope will finally make it impossible for the environmentalists to derail it.

Also included in the bill was \$195 million for the Clinch River breeder reactor, which will be able to reprocess spent reactor fuel into new fuel. The funds will continue the construction of the breeder over the noisy objections of the environmentalists.

Also included in the appropriations bill was \$456 million for magnetic fusion energy development. The allocation is not sufficient to start the engineering phase of a fusion energy device, to which Congress is committed by law.

### **Senate group bucks on Clean Air Act**

As it continued its mark-up on revisions of the Clean Air Act Nov. 25, the environmentalist-dominated Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works continued to vote overwhelmingly against the Reagan administration's efforts to eliminate some of the legislation's more egregious curbs on industrial growth. Leading the charge in this round was Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.), who proposed an amendment which blocks current and expected efforts of the Reagan administration to loosen motor vehicle air quality requirements via regulation. The Hart amendment, which passed by a vote of 10 to 3, strips the Environmental Protection Agency of authority to change heavy-duty truck emission standards, and codifies those standards as part of federal law.

Voting against the Hart amendment were Republicans Steve Symms (Idaho), Alan Simpson (Wyo.), and Frank Murkowski (Alaska). Those three, plus James Abdnor (S. Dak.), seem to be the only reliable support which the administration has on the nominally Republican-controlled committee in the administration's attempt to alleviate some of the environmental excess of the 1970s. While Committee Chairman Robert Stafford (R-Vt.) is known as a diehard environmentalist, other pro-growth Republicans such as Pete Dominici (N. Mex.) have been voting against the administration on crucial votes.

An earlier committee mark-up produced a similar 12 to 3 vote

against the administration, when Senator Symms proposed that economic factors be taken into account in the setting of what are known as "national secondary ambient air quality standards." Secondary standards are those which govern air quality indices that do not affect human health per se, such as visibility. The overwhelming defeat of that Symms amendment precluded any attempt to substantively amend primary standards.

### **Senator calls for abolishing the FEC**

Testifying before the Senate Rules Committee on Nov. 24, Sen. Roger Jepsen (R-Iowa) called on Congress to abolish the Federal Election Committee (FEC), saying "I firmly believe that returning to a simple election law will go much further in restoring the public confidence in their elected officials." Jepsen intends to introduce legislation calling for the dismantling of the FEC as a watchdog and enforcement agency, and transferring the financial disclosure requirements of existing law to an "Office of Federal Elections" in the General Accounting Office, and transferring the enforcement powers of the FEC to the Justice Department. The FEC has been charged with using its enforcement powers in a politically motivated and harassing fashion by a variety of groups.

Earlier this year, a move arose among some Republicans to kill off the FEC during the debate covering the periodic re-authori-

zation of the FEC. When that effort failed, a compromise emerged which extended FEC authorization for one year only, and established an eight-member Senate Task Force to examine reform proposals for the FEC. Jepsen was one of four Republican members of the Task Force (along with Senators Mathias (Md.), Packwood (Ore.), and Stevens (Ark.), although a spokesman pointed out that Jepsen's pending legislation represents his own thinking, and not that of the task force.

Jepsen's proposals were attacked by Rules Committee ranking Democrat Wendell Ford (Ky.). Ford is also chairman of the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee. Support for the FEC or proposals to toughen its procedures and provisions came from Senate Democratic Whip Alan Cranston and Common Cause.

## **D**emocratic task force sidesteps Volcker issue

Despite a 10-minute tirade against Paul Volcker and the Federal Reserve Board by a representative of the Michigan Homebuilders Association, the Senate Democratic "Emergency Task Force on Interest Rates" continued to duck the issue of the culpability of Federal Reserve Board Chairman Volcker in bringing on a new depression when it held a public policy forum on Nov. 20. Task Force chairman Don Riegle (D-Mich.) continually tried to place responsibility for the current economic crisis on the shoulders of President Ronald Reagan.

Nonetheless, Manny Dembs, the Michigan homebuilder, was the focus of national network news coverage of the hearings on the Nov. 20 evening news. Dembs brought people scurrying in from adjoining corridors and offices as he yelled in outrage, "It's a disgrace, this Volcker and the whole Federal Reserve Board. What they are doing to this country and people like me is a disgrace. They should resign. You should tell them to resign. You have to stop playing politician. Tell them to get out. I am worried about my country. . . . Who are these bankers that are doing this? I can't compete with Wall Street. I am just one citizen and I am being destroyed. I just have one thing to say—don't let the Federal Reserve destroy my country."

Following Dembs' outburst, Riegle intoned, "I think the Federal Reserve Board should hear your views, and I think the administration should hear your views." When Dembs asked Riegle who he thought the enemy was, Riegle slipped away by saying, "I think high interest rates are the enemy."

With one exception, the rest of the hearing was taken up with similar, albeit quieter, "grass-roots" renditions of the horrendous impact of the Fed policy.

Riegle has stated on the Senate floor that he intends to use the Task Force to create support for credit controls, which would give Paul Volcker free rein to determine who would get the already limited credit available. Credit controls are opposed by some task force members, especially John Melcher (D-Mont.).

## **T**ie foreign aid to population control

Congressman James Scheuer (D-N.Y.) intends to introduce legislation after the first of the year to link U.S. foreign aid to a country's willingness to impose population-control programs.

Scheuer is a leading spokesman for the depopulation lobby inside Congress and is a member of the Population Crisis Committee/Draper Fund.

In an interview made available to *EIR*, Scheuer claimed that development is intimately linked to population reduction. The best way to reduce population is to force women in the developing sector into low-wage, labor-intensive industry "to get them the hell out of the hut or the bedroom . . . put them to work so that they won't have time for so many kids." This, he said, is the secret of the low population growth rates in Hong Kong and Singapore.

The problem, said Scheuer, is that many developing countries desire "unnecessary things like nuclear power plants or steel mills." The time has come to prevent agencies of the U.S. government from encouraging this model of development, declared the Congressman. "These countries can all go to hell if they want, but we won't pay the ticket."

Sources close to Scheuer claim that he has support from some sections of the State Department for the legislation, particularly from the Agency for International Development. The entire genocide lobby is preparing a major mobilization behind the bill.