

Government News

Douglas M. Costle has been confirmed by the Senate as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. He was nominated for the post by President Carter on February 16.

Costle is a former commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, and has been a consultant to E.P.A. on land use policies. He holds an A.B. degree from Harvard University and a J.D. degree from the University of Chicago Law School.

The General Accounting Office has released a copy of a study highly critical of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, the research organization in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. According to the New York Times, the study points out that although millions of workers are exposed every day to hundreds of substances known to cause cancer and other diseases, final protective procedures have been imposed for only 15 such poisons in the five years the agency has been functioning.

The 116-page report of the G.A.O., the investigative arm of Congress, said that unless the two agencies can expedite the passing of emergency temporary standards, "it will take more than a century to establish needed standards for substances already identified as hazards." The study concluded that some of the \$727 million dollars the agencies have spent in the last five years might have been better spent on education and training activities related to toxic substances.

The enforcement procedure of O.S.H.A. were recently upheld by the Supreme Court. In a unanimous decision, the court rejected the arguments of two contractors who alleged the procedures unconstitutional on the grounds that they had been fined without benefit of a jury trial.

Justice Byron R. White, writing the decision of the court, held that the Seventh Amendment to the Constitution providing jury trials in civil suits with penalties of more than \$20 does not prevent Congress from establishing other enforcement procedures.

Scientists at Mississippi State Chemical Laboratory are attempting to develop degradable insecticides that could be used to control the imported fire ant under a cooperative agreement with the U.S.D.A.

The red and black imported fire ants, *Solenopsis invicta* and *S. richteri*, are serious pests of humans and agricultural production in the southeastern U.S. Since Mirex is being phased out as a control for the imported fire ant, new toxic bait formulations must be developed.

In studies to develop new baits, researchers at Mississippi State will synthesize new candidate chemicals that are readily degradable and have a slow or delayed toxic action.

The Agricultural Research Service of U.S.D.A. will provide \$24,000 for the study.