

GOVERNMENT

UPDATE

Surface mining regulations in jeopardy

Legislation pending in Congress could deal a blow to reclamation contractors and manufacturers of revegetation equipment and supplies. The legislation would return primary enforcement of reclamation regulations to the states and give them more time to meet Federal reclamation guidelines.

The Senate passed a bill (69-26) giving states 12 months to file state plans and delaying Federal lands programs until states have their own completed. A House bill is months from passage and a conference committee will probably be needed.

Congressmen are attempting to lighten the load of tough air quality standards and reclamation requirements on soft coal producers.

Although many states had existing requirements for revegetation, the Federal regulations were expected to cause a boom in reclamation work for outside contractors.

Senate nixes plant services for government

The Senate attached an amendment to the H.U.D. appropriations bill to prohibit any expenditures by the Federal government for plant care or watering services.

The amendment was not included in the original House bill and no solution has yet been reached in conference committee. Known as the Sasser amendment, the cuts could be misconstrued to costs for other horticultural services performed for the government agencies.

Firms may soon get capital back quicker

A bill shortening the length of time for businesses to recover investment capital for modernization and expansion may soon pass both Houses. The Capital Cost Recovery Act of 1979 will establish three classes for capital recovery periods:

Class I: non-residential structures and buildings (ten years)

Class II: all depreciable personal property (five years)

Class III: automobiles and light-duty trucks less than \$100,000 (three years)

Farm labor contractors beware of enforcement

National and regional nursery associations are warning members who use migrant or other forms of agricultural labor, to meet standards set by the Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act. Enforcement has reportedly been stepped up and many nurseries could face fines of \$5,000 or more according to AAN.

In other action, EPA may study exposure to pesticides by migrant workers. The Department of Labor is expected to ask EPA to handle monitoring and exposure studies relative to migrant workers while the Labor Department provides compliance and enforcement.

Also, a bill has been introduced in the Senate to provide temporary worker visas for 180 days for peak harvest periods. Quotas would be established to limit the number of visas.

AAN objects to USDA plant patents

AAN and the National Association of Plant Patent Owners filed a joint letter to the Secretary of Commerce Juanita Kreps opposing the transfer of plant patent administration from the Department of Commerce to USDA. The letter said under similar reasoning weapons should be patented by the Department of Defense, automobiles through the Department of Transportation, etc.

phases of turf management, including handling of equipment and vegetation, contract maintenance, personnel, and management. A number of sessions are aimed at energy conservation as well as water conservation.

A large display of products and equipment will be featured. There will also be on-site tours of campuses and parks in the Nashville area.

PARKS

Park program will distribute \$730 million

More than 100 communities in the United States have applied for federal funds totaling \$20 million in matching grants under the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program.

Administration of the funds begins October 1 to those cities showing the most critical need for park and recreation aid. Sometime in November or December the second round of funds, totaling \$40 to \$50 million, will be given. Additional funds will be designated in March, July, and October for 1980 at the same rate and continuing through 1983.

The Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, a bureau of the Department of the Interior, has been authorized to distribute the funds for the \$730 million program, which the President signed into law in November, 1978.

Most of the money, according to program guidelines, should be used for rehabilitation, including remodeling, expanding, or developing existing outdoor or indoor recreation areas and facilities. Projects may include improvements in park landscapes, building, and support facilities, but exclude routine maintenance and upkeep activities.

Some of the funds are for innovation. These are intended for cities who show cost-effective ways of changing physical recreation resources, such as land and buildings, into actual recreation opportunities for neighborhood residents.

There are 368 cities and counties eligible to receive direct matching grants. Landscape contractors and architects, parks maintenance personnel, and anyone wanting to know if his city has applied for a grant, should contact his mayor's office, where all information has been sent.