

GOVERNMENT

UPDATE

Revisions for Davis-Bacon

Major changes have been proposed in regulations issued under the Service Contract and Davis-Bacon Acts, in order to clarify and strengthen both laws, says Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall.

The Service Contract Act generally applies to any contract with the Federal government which is principally for the furnishing of services. Under the act, contractors and subcontractors are required to pay their employees, working on contracts in excess of \$2,500, monetary wages and fringe benefits determined by the Secretary of Labor in a locality and also observe safe, sanitary working conditions.

The proposed changes would revise, update, and clarify the Regulation 29 CFR Part 4 so that contracting agencies, contractors, and employees can be made fully aware of their responsibilities and rights.

The Davis-Bacon and related acts require the payment of prevailing wages and fringe benefits to employees of contractors and subcontractors performing on federally financed or assisted construction projects.

Proposed changes in 29 CFR Part 5 contain substantial revisions to the labor standards clauses which contracting agencies are required to include in their construction contracts. The major changes would affect procedures for:

- adding classifications and rates not listed in the wage determinations;
- the resolution of labor standards disputes;
- the withholding of contract funds for wage underpayments;
- and
- the debarment of contractors and subcontractors.

Certain changes have also been proposed to reduce the volume of enforcement reports exchanged between the contracting agencies and the department.

Act would provide water incentives

Congressman Norm Shumway, 14th District, California, has introduced the Irrigation Water Conservation Act of 1979 (H.R. 5965) which would provide incentives for conversion to efficient, water-conserving farm irrigation systems.

To provide the incentive for such conversions, Shumway's bill would permit an additional 10 percent investment tax credit for the use of such water conserving irrigation systems as drip irrigation, sprinkler systems, canal or ditch linings, pipeline equipment, or recovery systems. "Growers who use such equipment would also be able to depreciate that property over three years, thus receiving double encouragement to make the costly change," Shumway stated.

Pointing out that his legislation will benefit more than agriculture, Shumway said, "More water would be available for municipal use, groundwater recharge, and the enhancement of fisheries. Energy savings can be expected due to reduced irrigation pumping demands."

Interior approves reclamation plan

Assistant Secretary of the Interior Joan M. Davenport has approved a mining and land reclamation plan for CF&I Steel Corp.'s proposed underground coal operation on two Federal leases near Bokoshe, OK.

The mine plan was accepted with the stipulations that CF&I continuously evaluate the feasibility of recovering all or parts of the upper Harshorne coal seam and that the company protect the habitat of a chestnut-type tree that is being proposed for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Under the mine plan, CF&I would use existing surface facilities to process the coal and would assume all land reclamation responsibilities when Garland Coal Mining Co. completes its surface operations in 1982, including a reclamation bond amounting to about \$18,000 per acre.

PUBLICATION

Text on aquatic toxicology released

Aquatic Toxicology (STP 667), a compilation of 25 papers presented during a symposium program of the American Society for Testing and Materials, has been released by ASTM of Philadelphia, PA.

The publication covers the assessment of effects of pesticides, contaminants, and other chemicals or factors in the aquatic environment.

MEETING

Pesticide association discusses safe uses

"Chemicals will be an essential part of life in the future," said Chester L. Foy, head of Virginia Tech's department of plant pathology and physiology. Foy spoke at the Virginia Pesticide Association annual meeting which was held along with the Mid-Atlantic Agricultural Chemical and Equipment Trade Show on Jan. 23-24 at the Richmond arena.

"We can't go back to life as it was before pesticides," Foy said. "The world and science will not allow it."

Foy noted that contrary to public opinion, life expectancy has not decreased from the use of herbicides. He encouraged his audience to take the responsibility to get technology out of test tubes and into use.

Cecil Howes, Washington liaison officer for Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, gave the keynote address at the group's annual banquet. More than 300 listened to the talks and viewed booths of chemical and equipment companies.

Outgoing president James Gallman of the Stauffer Chemical Co. challenged the organization to double the number of exhibits by 1983. The newly elected president is Dennis Ketcham, sales representative of Du Pont Co. Other new officers are Joseph Will, vice president, Southern States Cooperative; Phyllis McCabe, honorary secretary, Chevron Chemical Co.; and Nora Hall Pankey, secretary and treasurer, Southern States Cooperative.

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