

News from Washington

Semiconductor industry wants Government help. The semiconductor industry has opened a campaign seeking Federal help in investing in new equipment and research and development and in competing with the Japanese. The campaign involves discussions with the news media as well as Capitol Hill testimony and lobbying.

The industry executives are asking for a change in depreciation rules that would allow some equipment to be depreciated over two years; a 10 percent tax credit for investment in capital; a 25 percent tax credit for R&D expenditures above the average spent in the past three years; and a 25 percent tax credit for research grants to universities for projects related to a company's business.

Robert N. Noyce, vice chairman of Intel Corp., told *Spectrum* that industry leaders are focusing on Congress rather than the Reagan Administration because "that is where the action is." He expressed optimism that House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.) intends to direct favorable legislation out of the Committee and through the House.

International Trade Department proposed to replace Commerce Department. Senator William Roth (R-Del.), chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee, has introduced a bill (S.970) that would create a new government department to centralize international trade efforts, replacing the Department of Commerce.

The new department, as proposed, would consist of the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and the Commerce Department's international trade and investment functions; elements of the Commerce Department involving industry analysis, productivity, and technological innovation; the trade and investment functions of the Department of State and the Treasury; the Patent Office; and the National Bureau of Standards.

Proposed legislation would involve NASA in automotive research. Rep. Thomas R. Harkin (D-Iowa) has introduced the Automotive Research Act of 1981, a bill that would launch the National Aeronautics and Space Administration into automotive research with an authorization of \$25 million.

Washington state waste law challenged. The U.S. Justice Department has asked a Federal court to overturn a Washington state law ratified last November banning importation of nonmedical radiation waste into the state. If the law remains, commercial nuclear power plants and various Federally managed activities in defense and research would lose access to the U.S. Ecology site near Richland, Wash.

Reagan Administration attempts to end nuclear agreement with India. The Reagan Administration has informed the Indian government that it intends to take steps to

end the 30-year nuclear cooperative agreement between the U.S. and India, which is in its 18th year. Last year Congress nearly stopped a shipment of 19 tons of nuclear fuel to India that had been approved by then-President Jimmy Carter.

Legislative alert

The Reagan Administration's tax package is currently being debated in Congress. The IEEF's U.S. Activities Board urges all members to write to their senators and representatives and ask them to support the inclusion in those tax bills of: (1) expansion of Individual Retirement Accounts to include active participants in employer-sponsored pension plans and (2) raising of contribution limits to at least \$2000.

Reports

• **Background Readings on Science, Technology and Energy R&D in Japan and China.** House Committee on Science and Technology—available without charge from House Committee on Science and Technology, Room 2319, Rayburn Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.

• **Three Mile Island Studies.** Senate Environment and Public Works Committee—available at no charge from the Senate Environment and Public Works Publications Office, 4200 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. This report presents a series of policy studies to supplement an earlier report on the investigation of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant accident.

Energy report

Five nuclear power reactors go into action in France. In May, France started up three pressurized-water nuclear reactors—Units B1 and 2 at Saint Laurent near Orleans and Unit 1 at Blaysis on the Atlantic coast, near Bordeaux. Two more units—Graveline No. 4 near Dunkirk and Tricastin No. 4 in the south near Avignon—became critical last month, criticality being the stage at which a nuclear chain reaction sustains itself. And one more unit—Dampierre No. 4 near Orléans—has been almost completed. It is expected to start up and operate at low power before the end of the year. As of May, 16 pressurized-water reactors, each capable of producing 900 megawatts of electric power, were operating in France. Together with other, older types of reactors, 23 nuclear-power-generating units were producing about 19 gigawatts, about 25 percent of the nation's total capacity. Because they serve baseload day and night, however, the nuclear power plants deliver more than their share of energy in the installed generating capacity; from January through April they supplied 35.1 percent of the total electric energy delivered in France.

The French nuclear power program calls for additions of at least 4300 MW in generating capacity each year, with the total reaching 64 GW in 1989. Bertrand Barre, nuclear energy attache with the French Embassy in Washington, D.C., explained

that this pace is possible because all the 900-MW pressurized-water reactor plants are practically identical and their parts and systems are "almost mass produced." Standardization makes it possible to keep to production and operation schedules, he said, because faulty components in one plant can be easily replaced by components that are intended for other plants. The new government, however, may slow the pace of nuclear power development in France.

Pasny awaits EPA approval of coal-refuse plant for New York. The Power Authority of the State of New York (Pasny) is awaiting approval by the Environmental Protection Agency of its plan to construct and operate a 700-megawatt power plant in the Arthur Kill section of Staten Island in New York. The power plant will burn both coal and fuels derived from city garbage. Stephen Shoenholz, assistant director of public information with Pasny, told *Spectrum* that the Staten Island plant is only one element in a 10-point plan by the authority to reduce oil imports to the State of New York by 50 percent in the next decade. The authority also plans to build a one-gigawatt pumped-storage hydroelectric plant at Prattsville, about 64 kilometers southwest of Albany, as part of its overall plan. Hearings on the project are under way with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Both the

Staten Island plant and the pumped-storage facility are scheduled for completion in six years. Pasny, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, operates six plants: three hydroelectric power plants—two for base load at the St. Lawrence River and at Niagara Falls and a pumped-storage plant at Blenheim Gilboa; two nuclear power plants—Indian Point No. 3, north of New York, and James FitzPatrick on the south shore of Lake Ontario; and the Astoria No. 6 oil and natural gas power plant in New York. Pasny also purchases hydro power from Canada.

Southern California Edison, Alcoa to study wind generator failure. Engineers with the Southern California Edison Co. of Rosemead, Calif., and the Aluminum Corporation of America in Pittsburgh are investigating the causes of the breakdown of an experimental vertical-axis wind machine (so-called Darrieus-type) at the utility's Devers substation near Palm Springs, Calif., in April. The machine was made by Alcoa. During a test, it developed excessive speed (60 rather than the design speed of about 40 revolutions per minute) that caused one of the three egg-beater-type blades of the machine to come loose and cut the two others. A similar experimental machine installed in Newport, Ore., was taken off line for further study and possible modification.