



NEWSLETTER

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LIBRARY
OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
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MAY BOARD ACTIONS

Implications of International Technology Transfer was approved as a project by the OTA Board. Assistant Director L.S. "Skip" Johns will head the effort.

The Board's role in approving release of OTA reports is to be clarified through the Director's seeking of legal opinion of interpretation of the OTA Act. Meanwhile, reports are to be sent to the Board for approval for release following May 8 interim guidelines suggested by the Director.

The Board discussed the request to OTA to assess Alternative Energy Futures. Because of the potential scope of the project, the Board authorized seeking supplemental funding and proceeding if funding was made available.

Governor Peterson recommended procedure changes in filling Council vacancies and reviewed the status of the OTA project to establish OTA priorities.

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES: ODUM TO LEAVE

Dr. Eugene Odum announced at the May 25 TAAC meeting his intention to leave the Council at the end of July.

Governor Peterson presented a method of appointing new members to the Council. The Board would vote, with each Member having the number of votes equal to the number of vacancies, until enough candidates had seven votes to fill those vacancies.

Council members discussed several issues, reflecting their particular fields of interest, to help identify priority projects.

Joe Coates reported results of the staff's efforts to date to identify priorities for OTA consideration.

KOLSRUD HEADS HEALTH GROUP; STUDIES STARTED

Gretchen Kolsrud has been named acting Group Manager for Health. Formerly with OTA's New and Emerging Technologies effort, Dr. Kolsrud headed the OTA Transportation Group, 1974-1976.

The Health Group is initiating two new background studies. Literature searches are under way for efforts on Pneumococcal Vaccine, and Computer Technology for Physician Competency Testing. The two analyses will serve as case studies to help address broad-based health issues for possible OTA investigations in the future. Both studies are to be completed in September.

The Health Group's report on Medical Information Systems was the subject of testimony by health professionals testifying before the Subcommittee on Domestic and International Scientific Planning, Analysis and Cooperation (DISPAC) of the House Committee on Science and Technology, on May 9. Dr. Herbert Sherman of Harvard Medical School began his testimony by reminding Members they had had "...the opportunity to see an excellent document..." from OTA. Gerald A. Biebink, Director, Health Care Management Systems, Inc., cited OTA's report for presenting "definitions useful for policy study."

REPORTS COMING OUT

Oceans' report on Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion will be delivered to the Congress in early June.

Materials' report, Analysis of Laws Covering Access Across Federal Lands--Options for Access in Alaska, was completed and delivered to OTA's Board for approval for release.

Applications of Solar Technology to Today's Energy Needs has first priority for publication. It's expected in mid-June.

Two Exploratory working papers on natural hazards have been completed. They are: "Criteria for the Evaluation of the President's Reorganization Plan in Disaster Preparedness," and "Criteria for the Evaluation of the Earthquake Act Implementation Plan."

OTA's APPROPRIATION

The House provided OTA with a FY '79 appropriation of \$9.7 million, \$300,000 less than the requested \$10 million. If this amount remains intact through Senate action, it would be an increase of \$700,000 over FY '78's \$8.97 million available funds. The limitation of 130 persons on staff size remains. Final action in both Houses is scheduled for July.

In accordance with a Congressional Board decision at its May 8 meeting, OTA has requested a supplemental appropriation of \$2 million, over three fiscal years, and requested an increase in staff of 10 persons for the pending project on Future Energy Alternatives.

R&D Group's paper on "R&D Cooperative Agreements" is due in mid-June, to coincide with OMB's forthcoming plan to modify federal-civilian cooperative efforts to foster technological change in the civil sector.

The R&D Group paper on "The Role of Demonstrations in Federal R&D Policy" is completed and in the publishing stream.

The Annual Report is before the Board for approval for publishing. It's expected off the press in June.

COAL SLURRY HEARINGS

OTA's coal slurry pipeline report was cited in hearings before the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Resources of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on May 25.

In testimony, *Congressman Mo Udall* mentioned OTA's "comprehensive study of the viability of the slurry alternative which I commend to your attention." He added: "With that study...we should be ready to make this important decision."

Chairman A. Daniel O'Neal of the Interstate Commerce Commission referred extensively to the OTA analysis in his testimony.

Congressman Bob Eckhardt testified that both Interior and Public Works committees in the House "have reported the bill this session after reviewing the comprehensive OTA coal pipeline report."

The Senate subcommittee will continue its hearings in June, at which time *Governor Peterson* is expected to present OTA findings.

OTA PRIORITY SETTING

Joe Coates continues to seek inputs from all OTA staff members as well as outsiders in his on-going effort to establish a preliminary list of priority issues. Resulting projects would complement those requested by committees on the Congress or evolved through group efforts to identify Congressional needs.

He asks for suggestions on future "issues, problems, difficulties" of U.S. or world nature "which might be suitable candidates for study and evaluation to inform, alert, or provide timely information to the Congress.

To date, Joe has held two general staff briefings (over brown bag lunches) and several meetings with group managers. He has briefed and sought input from the Council, and *Director Peterson* discussed the project with the Board at its May meeting.

Outside OTA, Joe has sent letters soliciting suggestions from various academic, government, public interest, business, environmental and other individuals. He has letters and forms available to staff members to send to concerned or informed persons of their acquaintance.

Joe stresses he would like to have any and all staff members attend upcoming brown bag sessions, at their convenience. So far, support staff have been underrepresented.

For details or forms, contact Joe or his assistant on this project, *Betsy Amin-Arsala*, at 4-2232.

ADMIN ITEMS

GOVERNOR PETERSON ATTENDS NORTH-SOUTH ROUND TABLE

At the invitation of the Society for International Development, Governor Peterson attended a meeting in Rome, May 18-20 of the North-South Round Table, an international group of renowned persons concerned with solving international problems. While in Rome he led a seminar sponsored by the U.S. Embassy on environmental and scientific matters.

Following this, on May 22, he presented a public lecture in Athens on "Science and Society" sponsored by the U.S. International Communication Agency (formerly USIA) and the Greek Ministry of Culture and Science. He also conducted a round table discussion on critical world problems sponsored by Doxiades Associates.

In both places, the OTA Director also met with members of U.S. Embassies and with local dignitaries. All of these groups were intensely interested in, and questioned him at length about, the kinds of issues with which OTA is involved, and the need for holistic approaches to problems of international scale and long-term scope.

A sound system will be installed in the first floor conference center in the next few weeks. This will complement OTA's communications capability, which includes a black and white portable T.V. (available for use by projects) which was provided to OTA by NSF.

Early in June, Robin Johnson and Martha Dexter will be trained in the "Legis" system. This computer system, run by the House, provides bill status information for Congress. We anxiously await this much-needed service.

Another person, Sandra Hecker, will be joining the Library staff in June to provide temporary assistance over the next six months.

HEART STARTERS: MORE CPR FOR OTA

Another class in CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) will be held on June 22 and 23. The class that was held last month went quite well, and we now have eight people certified in this life-saving technique. If you're interested in taking this upcoming class, contact Rose Grozak (4-0750).

Another reminder: May was blood pressure month. If you haven't already, drop by Rose's office and have your blood pressure checked.

VOX AD POPULUM

J.B. Cordaro, Food Group Manager, recently spoke to the 30th Annual Conference on Food and Drug Officials of Southern States on "OTA Food Safety Activities." He also presented a paper to the Hershey Foods Quality Assurance Conference in Louisville, Ky.

Food Project Leader Mike Phillips discussed "New and Emerging Food Marketing Technologies" at the 17th Annual Conference of the Food and Drug Law Institute.

Skip Johns, Assistant Director, participated in the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria. He spoke on the subject of energy and the environment.

Henry Kelly spoke to Resources for the Future; Personnel and Employment Security; and the Department of Commerce in May on solar energy.

Al Paladino, Materials Group Manager, is scheduled to present a paper on "Information and Early Warning in Materials Policy" on June 7 to the National Symposium of Critical and Strategic Materials in Washington.

On May 26, Joe Coates discussed "Technology: Impacts on Society and the Quality of Life" to the Civil Service Commission in Kings Point, N.Y. On June 1, he will speak on "The Future of Crime and It's Impact on the Courts" to the Supreme Judicial Court for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Conference, "The Courts -- 1984 and Beyond," in Boston.

PERSONALS

OTA SUGGESTIONS ---

In response to our invitation for suggestions of general interest, here are some we have received from people:

• Stemming from a desire to celebrate this lovely weather, several people have thought about the possibility of an OTA family picnic. If you'd like to help organize such a pleasant event, please let us know.

• In our last issue, we proposed a "letters to the editor" column to serve as a sounding board for OTA staffers. Similar to this, but perhaps more beneficial, might be a forum. Held on a regular basis, it would give people a chance to get together and discuss what's on their minds. We would like to hear your reactions.

• Clyde Behney has asked us to let all you tennis bums know that he is interested in starting a tennis ladder. For more information on that, contact Clyde (4-4142).

• Someone in the Director's office has suggested OTA initiate a Weight Watchers' Lunch Hour Club. Responses are welcome.

The National Academy of Sciences has published the long-awaited report on "Strategies for Applied Research Management." The report was written by Barry Barrington, who was executive director of the Committee on Public Engineering Policy of the National Research Council before coming to OTA.

Women take notice: Rich Raymond, that lovable consultant in Oceans, is getting married June 10. (So far, we're averaging one marriage a month.)

You may have noticed that Henry Kelly has a new bike. We understand his other bike was stolen.

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TRANSITIONS

There have been quite a few changes in the past month.

OTA recently said good-bye to Goldie Hallas, Cheryl Sullivan, Claudia Hanes, Emilia Govan and Debra Mears. Geraldine Duskie is on pregnancy leave.

We welcome Terry Parsons, Joe Coates' new secretary. Betty Alberg will be joining the Materials Group and Lillian Quigg the Energy Group in the next couple of weeks.

The Energy Group also has a new consultant -- Tom Bull. He will be working on their biomass project.

As most of you already know, Barry Barrington is now located in the R&D program offices. He is in charge of the Technological Innovation study. Barry's former TAAC secretary, Irene Zarechnak has joined the R&D staff. Nancy Ikeda is now a part of the Oceans Group. Marcia MacNaughton has been assigned as senior analyst for the National Crime Information Systems study.

SOFTBALL: FOUR NAUTS, ONE JUGGER

OTA's softball team, the "Juggernauts," won its opening game May 3 by 12-8 behind the inspirational leadership of Russell Peterson. In addition to throwing out the first pitch, OTA's Director stroked a base hit and snagged a long drive to center to lead the team's efforts.

OTA, however, has lost its last three games, most recently to Senate Documents 25-9. OTA's play led team coach Carol Drohan to schedule a practice for Saturday, June 3, at 10 a.m. at Augustinian College.

In a non-league game against Senator Glenn's team, OTA rallied to score 15 runs in the last four innings, but still fell short by 17-15. In that May 18 game, Jerry "Swivel Hips" Harden's performance showed best the margin of talents. After smashing hits in two earlier trips to the plate, Jerry was out-swivelled by the short-shortened Glenn pitcher. Swivel whiffed.

In an earlier game May 10, OTA lost to a team from the Republican Policy group. OTA's record now stands at 1-4, but on 1-2 in Senate League play. (The last game, on Thursday, June 1, against ICF, Inc., a non-league game, saw OTA lose, 9-14.)

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