

making the news

From Associated Press Reports

WASHINGTON — Sen. Edward M. Kennedy will announce formation of an "exploratory" campaign committee Monday, an aide said Wednesday, making the Massachusetts Democrat an official candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Tom Southwick, Kennedy's press secretary, confirmed that announcement of the campaign committee will be made Monday after several sources in the movement to draft Kennedy for the party nomination said they had received indirect signals that the move was imminent.

Registration of a committee with the Federal Election Commission will make Kennedy a legal candidate, although he is not expected to formally announce his candidacy until later in the year.

RAINIER — A mock accident will be staged at the Trojan nuclear plant today to test an emergency response plan that already has been described as inadequate by a U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission task force.

The date of the test was leaked to various news media this week, prompting an anti-nuclear group to question the value of the drill.

The Trojan Decommissioning Alliance, a group that wants to force closure of Oregon's lone nuclear-generating facility, says the test of the response plan will produce artificial results because the drill won't come as a surprise.

"In order to test the adequacy of an evacuation plan, a drill has to occur in realistic circumstances," said Julie Levak, a spokesperson for the anti-nuclear group. "Otherwise, the outcome will be artificial."

Bruce Landrey, a spokesman for Portland General Electric Co., which operates and is principle owner of the plant, said PGE did not intend to make the time of the emergency drill public.

Nevertheless, Landrey says the test will be the most comprehensive conducted at the 1.13 megawatt plant since the facility was completed in 1975.

Ontario — Funding for an experimental passenger railway system through the Willamette Valley neared approval when the Oregon Transportation Commission decided to ask the state Legislative Emergency Board for \$1.12 million to help finance the project.

But the commission declined to recommend approval of the funding. Instead, it voted unanimously Wednesday to refer the funding request to the Emergency Board without recommendation.

The experiment was proposed by the Willamette Valley Rail Study Committee — a group of legislators and private citizens appointed by the legislature.

The Public Transit Division of the Transportation Department brought the funding request to the commission.

During the 18-month experiment, passenger trains would provide two round trips daily Eugene-Springfield to Portland with stops in Albany, Salem, Woodburn and Oregon City.

The experiment would begin next January.

PORTLAND — A group of 17 publicly owned utilities have asked the federal government for permission to study the possible construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Snake River near Asotin, Wash.

The dam would be located on the last free-flowing stretch of the Snake.

The request was filed by the Pacific Northwest Generating Co., a group of 17 consumer-owned utilities that serve 114,000 customers in rural areas of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana.

If the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approves the request, the group would have three years to study the effects of the project. Following the study, the utilities would decide whether to apply for state or federal permits to build the dam.

The dam would be located five miles upstream from Lewiston, Idaho.

Nuclear waste shipments cut

WASHINGTON (AP) — By deciding to stop or cut nuclear waste shipments into their states, three governors are signaling Washington they are unwilling to take the political heat for a national problem.

Nevada this week closed the second of the nation's only three low-level waste dumps.

A burial site in Washington state has been shut down for three weeks. Shipments to the only other site — in South Ca-

rolina — are expected to be curtailed next week.

Spokesmen for the nuclear power industry say the problem is not immediate for them since power plants have on-site storage capacity. But some officials say hospitals and research facilities will run into storage problems within a few weeks.

Some hospitals already have asked doctors to curtail the use of radioactive materials

because of expected storage problems.

The sudden militancy by the governors of Washington, Nevada and South Carolina is an attempt to force the Carter administration to play a stronger role in the disposal of low-level wastes, an issue which could become crucial in an election year.

"I'm just tired of having to assume the responsibility for having our people take the risks in a system that is not properly regulated," complained Nevada Gov. Robert List as he resisted attempts Tuesday to reopen the burial site near Reno.

What also gnaws at the governors is that no dumps are located in areas where most of the wastes are produced — including most of the Northeast.

On Oct. 4, Washington Gov. Dixy Lee Ray, former head of the Atomic Energy Commission, closed the burial site near Richland, Wash., charging lax enforcement of shipping regulations.

On Tuesday, after List's action, Gov. Dick Riley made it clear he will not allow more waste to be diverted into South Carolina, where 80 percent of the nation's low-level radioactive garbage is already being buried. He predicted forced cutbacks in shipments next week.

The governors' specific complaints vary, but their anger is aimed at the federal government. They argue that while plans for a national program languish, the three states are becoming the dumping ground for the rest of the country.

Price controls remain, oil profits prompt vote

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bowing to the wishes of the Carter administration, the House reversed itself Wednesday and voted to retain price and allocation controls on gasoline through mid-1981.

The 225-189 turnabout vote came amid expressions of dismay by congressional leaders over soaring oil-industry profits.

"It's a disgrace to the nation. It's just an absolute and utter disgrace," House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill said of the large, recently posted third-quarter profits of some major oil companies.

The House action overturned a 191-188 vote taken on Oct. 12 for immediate and full gasoline decontrol — action some critics said might have sent prices at the pump soaring toward \$2 a gallon.

The vote means the controls, which opponents claim have done little to check spiraling prices at the pump, will stay on until Sept. 30, 1981, when they are set to expire automatically.

Knocking price and allocation controls off gasoline would create serious confusion in the energy marketplace, said Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich., who led the reconsideration effort.

He called immediate decontrol "not very well thought out."

But Rep. James A. Courter, D-N.J., author of the decontrol amendment, defended his proposal, claiming it would make gas lines less likely in the future by shucking the government's complex allocation system.

And, Courter argued, "controls don't stop prices from increasing."

Wednesday's House vote leaves intact the president's decision to phase out price lids

gradually on U.S.-produced crude oil by 1981. It also has no effect on heating oil or diesel fuel, which are already free from price controls.

In another blow at oil companies, the House also approved 264-143 an amendment by Rep. Peter Peyser, D-N.Y., requiring monthly publication by the Energy Department of now-private information it gathers from the industry on fuel supplies and refining capacity.

The first gas decontrol vote came on a Friday when many members had already left for the weekend. The vote caught leaders and the White House by surprise.

But on Wednesday, the leadership brought out the troops and was able to turn the vote around.

The vote may have been, at least in part, a gesture of frustration at the recent profit statements of big oil companies.



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