

Bill pushes 'right to know' about chemicals state uses

By Paul Ertelt
Of the Emerald

If passed by the Oregon Legislature, the Community-Right-to-Know Bill will inform citizens of dangerous chemicals being used in the state and will better prepare authorities to deal with a chemical emergency, says Erik Nilsson, an OSPIRG legislative intern.

House Bill 2255, sponsored by the Oregon State Public Interest Research Group, would authorize the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to establish a survey of industrial chemicals being used in the state. The DEQ would then make that information available to state officials and to local health boards, police and fire departments.

The information would be updated continually and would be made available to anyone who requested it.

"Community right-to-know provides us a first step in protecting ourselves from dangerous chemicals," Nilsson says. "If we don't know, there is not much we can do."

This bill is modeled after a program recently established in New York state that is "operating very successfully and very inexpensively," he says.

Under the right-to-know program, the DEQ will compile information on all the "priority pollutants" manufactured, transported, stored and disposed of in Oregon. Priority pollutants are chemicals used in manufacturing that are listed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as health hazards.

The survey would include all industries listed by the EPA as having a history of pollution. The EPA lists 21 categories of potentially polluting industries, including timber products processing and mechanical products manufacturing.

Also, the survey would include all industries requiring a waste-water disposal permit.

The DEQ also would compile an inventory of the location of hazardous waste sites established during the past 30 years.

Industries refusing to comply with the survey could be subpoenaed by the state and would face fines if they ignored the subpoena.

Although he admits that chemical hazards are not as serious in Oregon as they are in New York, Nilsson says Oregon industries do deal with dangerous chemicals.

Of particular importance in Oregon are "penochlorophenol," a preservative used in the timber industry, and "trichloroethylene," a solvent used in electronics manufacturing. Both are carcinogenic and do not break down rapidly in the environment, Nilsson says.

Nilsson says he does not believe this bill will have a serious negative impact on Oregon industry.

"It would be an expense to industry, but everything we have seen indicates it would be a very small expense," he says. The only cost would be in the labor to fill out the required survey forms, he says.

A clause of the bill would allow an industry to claim an exemption in the case of a trade secret. Information on those chemicals could only be released in an emergency or after public hearings.

The House Environment and Energy Committee will begin hearings on the bill Wednesday in Hearing Room F of the Capitol Building in Salem. The committee will only hear invited testimony from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m., but the public may attend and may testify beginning at 7 p.m.

OSPIRG is organizing a carpool for those interested in attending or testifying at the evening hearing.

Those interested can sign up in the OSPIRG office in Suite 1 EMU before 5 p.m. Wednesday.



Open wide and say...

No, he's not yawning. In fact, Bruce Fidler, director of the Maranatha Christian Center, rarely even stands still on the EMU Courtyard mound when he ascends the slope on sunnier days to sermonize.

But loud lectures and animated gestures weren't enough for Fidler Monday. To further catch the attentions of students passing by, Fidler dressed in early Colonial American garb for his Presidents' Day talk.

Photo By Michael Clapp

First day of drive earns \$1,500

Donations open African Relief Week

By Diana Elliott
Of the Emerald

Contributions to the African Relief Week Drive netted more than \$1,500 Monday as University President Paul Olum, International Studies director Clarence Thurber and representatives from the campus' 25 fraternities and sororities dropped their donations into a 4-foot-high glass case in the EMU lobby.

Olum officially designated next week as African Relief Week, which will be marked by a number of events dealing with hunger relief and education in Ethiopia and other East African countries.

The event is sponsored by the International Studies Association for the benefit of Oxfam America's African relief efforts.

The fraternities and sororities will fast

next week, donating the money they would have spent on food to the relief drive. Each house projected how much the members would save and donated their checks during Monday's ceremony.

"We have asked each house to skip at least one meal during the week," says Bob Kraus, public relations chair of the Interfraternity Council. "Each house was asked to make a minimum contribution of \$60."

"We just paid beforehand from the money that each house expected to save from the fast," says Stacy James, president of Panhellenic Council.

The Greek houses decided to fast during African Relief Week because members wanted to do something to help monetarily and to raise consciousness about the situation in Africa, Kraus says.

"We're affected by the pictures we see of the starving Ethiopians," Kraus says.

Kraus says he believes the house members will make a sincere effort to participate in the fast by not eating elsewhere that day.

"It's not like the whole Greek system is going to be heading to McDonald's," Kraus says.

Generally, when the houses decide to do something as a group, they all stick together, James says. "So far it's been well-received by all the houses," she adds.

The total Greek contribution has not yet been calculated because each house made individual donations. Although the minimum contribution was set at \$1,500, both Kraus and James believe the total donation will be higher.

Some houses will be fasting all day,

and others will fast during lunch and dinner, James says.

"We're a large group so we can come up with more money," James says. "Not eating one sandwich can earn a lot of money for this cause."

Kenan Gibbs, a student coordinator of African Relief Week, approached the Interfraternity Council to seek help in raising money.

"The fraternities and sororities are a great resource," Gibbs says. "Unfortunately they're often overlooked as willing participants."

The Residence Hall Governance Committee also is sponsoring a fast in the dormitories during African Relief Week, says Marjory Ramey, housing director. They will not be donating their contribution until after they fast, however.