New target for TAPS?

Construction of a pipeline to ship oil from Alaska's North Slope has been delayed for at least a year.

A U.S. district judge in Washington last week handed down a preliminary injunction stopping Interior Secretary Walter Hickel from giving Trans Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) a permit to build a 390-mile road. The road is the first step in laying a 48-in. pipeline, which will stretch 800 miles from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez.

Hearings on a permanent injunction won't be scheduled until late this year. TAPS, losing the prime spring season for start of construction, probably can't begin until Mar. '71, at the earliest. (It will take about two years before the work is completed and oil flows through the pipeline.)

And if conservationist foes of the pipeline win a permanent injunction, the oil firms might lose an additional year or two. Upshot: they may be forced to redesign the pipeline to accommodate environmental factors.

New Timetable? The delays will be costly to the three major owners of TAPS: Atlantic Richfield, Humble Oil and British Petroleum. The pipeline company already has spent $50 million preparing for construction, going so far as to have pipe delivered to Alaska, even though the construction permit had not been issued. The firms had hoped to be selling Alaskan oil in the U.S. by mid-'72.

Atlantic Richfield says that while it hasn't seen the full details of the ruling, "we are, at the moment, planning to continue our exploratory and development drilling program on the North Slope. . . . We are convinced TAPS should be built in the near future to bring Prudhoe Bay oil to the petroleum-consuming centers of this country."

The oil companies feel that a short delay won't have a significant impact. One reason cited: it would take 18 months to build the pipeline, and they gave themselves enough leeway.

An extended delay, however, might cause some special problems for British Petroleum. BP's merger agreement with Standard Oil (Ohio) ties the amount of Sohio stock BP gets to the rate at which it delivers its North Slope oil. The company controls about half the reserves in the area.

The case against the pipeline was brought by an amalgam of outdoors groups, headed by Wilderness Society. The major argument cites the pipeline's potential dangers to the Arctic ecology.

Other pressures were building up to dissuade Interior from issuing the pipeline permit—even before the injunction. The House Conservation Subcommittee, for instance, had asked that answers to a long list of environmental questions be developed before the go-ahead was given.

Soap sales up 4.4%

(Thousand pounds)	'69	% Change
Soap	942,364	−3.7
Syn. det.	5,011,748	+4.7
Total	5,954,112	+3.3
(Thousand dollars)	**'69**	**% Change**
Soap	359,970	−1.7
Syn. det.	1,203,417	+6.3
Total	1,563,387	+4.4

Good year for soapers

Despite the controversy over phosphates in detergents, '69 sales of soaps and synthetic cleaners rang up record totals for the 11th consecutive year, according to The Soap and Detergent Assn.

Total sales of 36 manufacturers participating in the survey came to 5.954 billion lbs., up from 5.764 billion lbs. in '68 (*see table*). Dollar volume rose to $1.563 billion from '68's $1.498 billion. Detergents accounted for 84.2% of the poundage—5.012 billion vs. 4.787 billion a year earlier. They also represent 77% of the dollars: $1.203 billion, up from $978 million.

Soap sales were 942 million lbs., down from 978 million in '68. Dollar volume also dropped, to $360 million from $366 million.

Fourth-quarter '69 results show a decrease in poundage but an increase in dollar sales. Total poundage: 1.319 billion, down from 1.368 billion in same-period '68. Soaps fell to 214 million lbs. from 229 million; detergents, to 1.105 billion lbs. from 1.138 billion. Dollar volume, however, was $357 million, up from $353 million. Detergents rose to $273 million from $266 million. Soap sales declined to $83.8 million vs. $86.5 million.

PCBs come under fire

Monsanto has had a program since '68 to keep its polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) plasticizers from contaminating the environment, says Howard Minckler, vice-president and general manager of the company's Organic Chemicals Division.

That's Minckler's reply to a demand by Representative William Ryan (D., N.Y.) for controls on the use of such products. Ryan contends that the PCBs, like DDT (another polychlorinated polycyclic compound), are ecologically harmful in that they persist in nature, are toxic to animals and affect the reproductive cycle. Ryan is calling for a ban on PCB in pesticides, fixing of food tolerance levels, and studies by the Environmental Quality Council and the Interior Dept.

PCBs, which are made by other companies in Europe and Japan, were found in fish in '66 by Swedish scientists. Studies at the University of California have confirmed the presence of these chemicals in the environment. Ryan says that "Environment" the publication of the Scientists Institute for Public Information (St. Louis) brought this matter to his attention.

Closed System: Monsanto, which makes its Aroclor plasticizers in plants at Anniston, Ala., and Sauget, Ill., concedes that PCBs have appeared in the environment. Minckler points out that these products—unlike pesticides—are not sprayed or dusted on crops or lands. In fact, it is marketed chiefly as a sealed system in the insulation of transformers and capacitors.

"We do not know of any current use of PCBs in insecticides," Minckler continues. "Even so, we are asking the Agriculture Dept. to reject any insecticide that has PCB as an inert carrier."

He emphasizes that PCB is not used in household products. It appears that the material gets into the environment from the manufacturing process or from decomposition of discarded products containing PCBs.

Ryan believes that federal action is needed, but Monsanto, which maintains that the material is not highly toxic, is already tightening its precautions against PCB pollution. Among the measures adopted: use of alternate products where advisable, improved production techniques and pollution control devices, and coordination with customers.

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