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LETTERS

41-107 INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH MO. 90,000

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The sad failures of industry

YOUR EDITORIAL against the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) that grants significantly broader powers to EPA calls for getting "this needless and repressive law changed." Your reasons include increased costs, reduction of new product introduction, and loss of jobs. The editorial fails to point our that these predicted costs are balanced by great potential benefits and savings.

I will not go into details regarding some of the sad failures of industry to apply adequate tests to several products (including thalidomide and distibesterol) or the recent evidence that even when test results have been produced, several such tests may have been faked.

The costs of even small increases in cancers, mutations, birth defects, and other chemically modulated diseases and conditions is probably more enormous than the expected costs of controls.

Direct medical costs to individuals and health plans, loss of income and productivity, family disruption as well as increased environmental disruption are produced by exposure to inadequately tested chemicals and to unmonitored dumping of wastes into "free" air, water, and earth.

Controls expensive? Yes. Needless? No, No, No.

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Industry to blame

YOUR RECENT editorial (March 1977) surprises and disappoints me. It surprises me because you have generally taken a rather enlightened attitude on environmental matters. It is disappointing because you find the T.S.C.A. "needless and repressive."

Surely you can't deny that industry has brought this law on themselves. Monsanto assured everyone years ago that its product, PCBs, were being used only in circumstances which would not cause environmental or health related damages. Today evidence suggests it is ubiquitous in the environment and is damaging to ecological systems.

Allied Chemical did not contribute to endangering the health of people in Hopewell, VA, or the aquatic organisms in the St. James River. There really are no toxic chemicals floating around in our air, rivers and lakes, or ground water aquifers contributing to increased respiratory diseases, cancer, and the like.

No, this needless law was passed merely to exacerbate the unemployment problem and increase costs of production. By the way, although it may increase costs of testing and compliance by $360 million to $1.3 billion annually, what do you suppose the *savings and values* might be ultimately in decreased medical costs and improved quality of the environment?

I can hardly wait to learn what new persistent pesticide, or aerosal deodorant, or cheap plastic gimmick for the kitchen the chemical industry will provide to grace our impoverished shelves.

Eugene Le Febvre
Carterville, IL

More background sound

IN YOUR April issue you report on "Background Noise Sold for Privacy" on page 40. Please be advised that the British are far from being alone in this business. There are at least eight firms selling this type of equipment in the U.S. and probably hundreds of installations exist. An extensive state-of-the-art report on open plan office acoustics has been prepared by the American Society of Testing Materials Committee E-33 on Environmental Acoustics. By the way, we prefer the Term Environmental Background Sound.

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