

# Pipeline to 'test' methods

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — Energy Secretary James Schlesinger is making an all-but-scrubbed plan by Standard Oil Co. of Ohio to pipe Alaskan oil to the Midwest via Texas a major test of his department's ability to get things done.

Schlesinger, who has drawn some heavy congressional criticism recently, laid down the gauntlet Tuesday by announcing efforts to revive Sohio's plan for a major terminal in Long Beach, Calif., and a 1,000-mile pipeline from Long Beach to Midland, Texas.

Sohio had announced last week it was abandoning the \$1 billion project, first proposed in 1975, because of "endless" governmental permit procedures and pending and threatened litigation against it.

But at a 2½-hour meeting in Schlesinger's office with California state officials, several congressmen and executives of Sohio, it was decided that attempts would be made to eliminate all of the pipeline's regulatory and legal barriers within the next six months.

"This project has been in the national interest," Schlesinger said. "It represents somewhat of a test to see if our procedures can work."

"If we are unable to make existing procedures work, we face an institutional impasse in this country," he said.

Sohio had proposed a major terminal in Long Beach to handle Alaskan crude, which would then be transported through 1,000 miles of pipeline to Midland, Texas. From Midland, it would move through existing pipelines that already carry Texas crude to Sohio's refineries in Ohio. Schlesinger emphasized that even if all barriers are overcome, Sohio has not promised to go ahead with the project.

Sohio has obtained most of the permits it needs, but is apparently concerned about pending litigation opposing the project in California state courts.

About 850 miles of the proposed pipeline already exists; it was built to transport natural gas from Texas to California, but now is little used for that purpose.

The Alaska pipeline currently moves 1.2 million barrels of oil daily to California, but California refineries cannot handle it all. The pipeline could handle 2 million barrels daily, but oil firms are reluctant to increase production because of the expense of transporting the oil through the Panama Canal to refineries in the East.

Sohio, which already has sunk \$50 million into the pipeline project, estimated it would save 75 cents to \$1 a barrel by transporting the oil through the proposed pipeline.

Schlesinger noted the project has been tied up for five years, and each year it becomes less profitable to Sohio because the amount of its North Slope oil will decline by 1983, the earliest possible year the pipeline could be in operation.

In answer to a question, however, Schlesinger said the chances of the federal government building the pipeline are "miniscule."

But California Air Resources Board chief Tom Quinn, who asked for the meeting with Schlesinger, said it was his opinion that it was more likely to be built through federal action. The company doesn't want to continue it.

Quinn contended Sohio actually has all the major permits it needs — or the promise of them — to begin the project immediately, "but they obviously didn't want to go forward."



Police pick up another car

Campus Police are continuing the policy of towing away cars parked illegally and have received space in Lot 7 behind the Reed McDonald Building. The unlucky owner

will have to pay A-I Wrecker \$20 to get the car back. Police picked the lock to open the car door and secure the steering wheel.

Battalion photo by Robin Linn

## Bill to reduce penalty for usurious lenders

United Press International  
AUSTIN — The House Wednesday tentatively approved a bill that would reduce the amount borrowers can recover when lenders charge excessive interest rates.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Bob McFarland, R-Arlington, permits borrowers to recover three times the amount of usurious interest (interest in excess of the state's legal limit) stated in the contract. McFarland amended his bill to provide that the amount paid by the lending institution could not be less than \$2,000.

Current law allows borrowers to collect twice the amount of total interest, not just the usurious amount, contracted for in the loan if the interest is higher than the legal limit.

Opponents of the bill, led by Rep. John Bryant, D-Dallas, tried unsuccessfully to amend the bill which they said favors savings and loans associations and other financial institutions at the expense of borrowers. The bill would apply to any errors in current loans, so that borrowers who are now paying excessive interest could not recover as much penalty payments as they can under the current lending laws.

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