

# Cousteau 'terrified' over toxic waste plans

**United Press International**  
 WASHINGTON — Legendary oceanographer Jacques-Yves Cousteau said Wednesday he is "terrified" by plans to burn toxic wastes at sea, noting a 99.99 percent burn rate still means 30 tons of deadly PCBs will be dumped into the Gulf of Mexico.

Top Environmental Protection Agency and Coast Guard officials, meanwhile, acknowledged risks with ocean incineration of such toxic wastes as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and said there were no guarantees of 100 percent cleanup in an accident.

However, EPA water chief Jack Ravan and Rear Admiral Clyde Lusk Jr. told a congressional hearing they felt confident there could be sufficient safeguards in the ocean burning of some of the 150 million tons of toxic waste generated annually.

"I can think of no worse place for such dangerous chemicals to be transported or destroyed than the sea. I am terrified by this idea," Cousteau said, however. "PCBs can compromise the future of the animal species. We are talking about a matter that may affect our lives as well."

Cousteau submitted written testimony that the present burn rate standard of 99.99 percent destruction still means 30 tons of hazardous chemicals that should be looked at first.

The EPA in October tentatively decided to issue 3-year permits to Chemical Waste to use Vulcanus incineration ships to burn such cancer-causing wastes as PCBs and dioxin, and a six-month research permit to burn DDT.

Public outcry over the proposal — under which the ships would operate out of Mobile, Ala., and burn waste in Gulf of Mexico area 190 miles from the coast — led to Wednesday's oversight hearing by two House Merchant Marine and Fisheries subcommittees. More than 6,300 people last month attended a hearing in Brownsville, Texas, to oppose the Chemical Waste permits.

Opponents contend the EPA is pushing through permits for ocean incineration without sufficient study, safeguards or regulations to govern the alternative waste disposal method. They fear an accident could cause a loss of human life, as well as taint or kill fragile ocean environments.

Environmentalists, lawyers and citizen groups joined Wednesday in urging a delay in incineration permits until appropriate regulations are written but a Chemical Waste executive said it would be "grossly unfair" to halt further action on its permit applications.

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# Vacherie in running for nuclear storage

**United Press International**  
 SHREVEPORT, La. — The nation's first nuclear waste repository could be located in a north Louisiana salt dome, and

the validity of a veto power the state claims to hold over such a proposal is unclear, a federal energy official said Wednesday.

The Vacherie salt dome, which straddles the Webster-Bienville parish line in north-west Louisiana, is one of nine sites in six states being considered for the repository. At least two other salt domes also are under study by the DOE.

"It is not the most preferred of the salt domes, but the guidelines by which the department will go have not been finalized," said Tom Baillieul of the DOE. "It would be impossible for me to say Vacherie's status is in or out at this time. There is a possibility that it would be nominated."

"At such time as we would recommend a site for a first repository, that site would be the most extensively studied piece of real estate in the world," he said.

Rep. Charles "Buddy" Roemer and Sen. J. Bennett Johnston, both D-La., have said the dome was found unsuitable for nuclear waste storage and would not be among three sites eventually nominated for the repository. Gov.-elect Edwin Edwards

Tuesday issued a statement reminding President Reagan of a 1978 agreement giving the state power to veto location of a nuclear waste storage facility in Louisiana.

But Baillieul said the validity of that agreement was unclear, particularly in light of a 1982 law giving states the right to object to location of a waste facility in their areas.

"I don't know which of the agreements is most binding," he said.

Federal energy officials will hold an "information exchange" in Minden Thursday to allow residents to discuss issues of concern with geologists, scientists, engineers and other experts involved in the site evaluation process. The meeting follows a public hearing held last month.

"We look at these as one-on-one discussions between people who are concerned and knowledgeable experts who have answers," Baillieul said.

# School officials to face lawsuit

**United Press International**  
 AUSTIN — Attorney General Jim Mattox used a recently passed law Wednesday to file a lawsuit against two San Antonio school officials for allegedly awarding construction contracts without seeking competitive bids.

The suit alleges Antonio G. Alvarez and Herbert Brewer, both officials with the San Antonio Independent School District, illegally awarded contracts valued at more than \$5,000 without seeking the bids.

The contractors, Joe Rincon, owner of Elco Plumbing, and W.A. Wahrmond, a general contractor, also were charged with accepting the jobs without

following bidding procedures required by the Texas Education Code.

Mattox said the contracts were for plumbing services at Highland Hills Elementary, Forest Elementary, Alamo Station Elementary, Riverside Park Elementary and Schench Elementary schools.

The suit seeks civil penalties against the defendants in court costs in addition to an injunction prohibiting the contractors and school officials from participating in future SAISD contracts unless they let through competitive bids.

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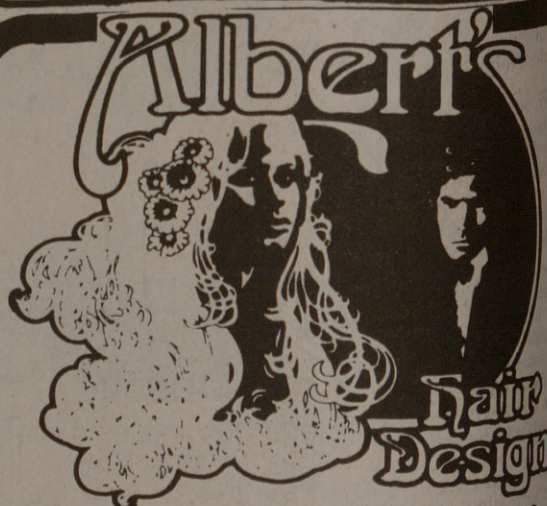
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