

Noise bill passes, giving EPA louder voice

A comprehensive bill setting maximum noise levels for machinery, including every type of construction equipment, is under scrutiny in the Senate after House passage. The measure, authorizing fines up to \$25,000 for noncompliance, applies only to new machinery.

The proposal gives the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) broad new powers to control noise pollution. According to the bill's chief sponsor, Rep. Paul Rogers (D-Fla.), it would give the government the tools it needs "to realize a significant reduction in the levels of noise around us within three or four years."

The bill directs the EPA to promulgate noise emission standards for new construction and transportation equipment, and electrical and electronic ma-

chinery. In setting the standards, EPA is required to give appropriate consideration to technological feasibility and cost. The agency must establish the criteria within 18 months should the bill become law.

In other provisions:

- Courts could direct local agencies to enforce the law.

- Citizens could sue suspected violators and also federal agencies that are suspected of failing to enforce the provisions.

- EPA would have the power to require labels on equipment that it believes might generate noise adversely affecting public health or welfare. And it could require informative labeling on products claiming to be noise reducing.

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