

Dannemeyer: Ozone hoax is 'bad science'

On Aug. 6, Rep. William Dannemeyer (R-Calif.) announced at a press conference in Washington, D.C. that he would introduce a resolution into the U.S. Congress, calling for a presidential commission to investigate whether or not there exists any scientific basis for concern about supposedly declining levels of stratospheric ozone. Dr. Hugh Ellsaesser of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and Dr. S. Fred Singer of the University of Virginia, two prominent scientists who have questioned the validity of the "ozone hole" scare, also spoke. The bill has now been introduced as House Resolution 547.

Excerpts from the press conference follow:

Dannemeyer: . . . We all know that the world is engaged in a process of cleaning up our environment. I certainly classify myself in that desire. But we are finding ourselves essentially divided, I think, into two areas that can be classified as the preservationists and another group that I identify with as an environmentalist. The preservationist crowd has a bit in its mouth, so to speak, today. They were successful in getting a resolution adopted in Montreal in 1987 that the U.S. Senate ratified under the leadership of Sen. Al Gore. I think it was well intentioned, but very bad science, and maybe they think it was good politics, but I think bad politics as well.

It was a serious error of judgment in the adoption of that protocol, calling for the banning of CFCs [chlorofluorocarbons] by the year 2000. I think it was based on faulty science and faulty data that needs to be looked at again.

President Bush early this year made a decision to speed up the banning to 1995, and I think that was an error in judgment as well.

The impact on consumers in the world is absolutely profound, if we continue on the current course of banning CFCs. I guess in a way I can suggest as a tip, if you happen to hold stock in Du Pont, you are in good shape, because so far they are the only organization in the world that I am aware of that has an alternative for freon [a leading CFC], that is currently being used as a refrigerant all over this world. But we as consumers, whether driving our automobiles or using our air conditioners, I had better wake up, because if this current course is pursued to its conclusion,

and CFCs are banned at all—whether in 1995 or in 2000—the cost in human suffering is going to be absolutely profound.

Some experts have said that we could experience a loss of 20 to 40 million people a year, who will die of disease or starvation because of denying to the world's people the refrigerants that are badly needed in the storing of food or medicines or vaccines, or whatever. And if you are driving your car into a repair shop today to have the air conditioning fixed, you may encounter a repair cost of \$100-150. But if CFCs are banned, that cost could go to \$200-300, and instead of that air conditioning unit lasting for the lifetime of your car, whatever it is, because of the toxic nature of the replacement for CFCs, we consumers may have to replace our air conditioning units in our automobiles or homes every three years, at tremendous cost. The replacement cost for 610 million refrigerators and 120 million cold-storage units and 150 million auto air conditioners is estimated to cost up to \$2 trillion.

This is all based on what I consider to be very faulty data: The claim is made that CFCs will deteriorate in the atmosphere and release chlorine; and the science is that seawater releases about 600 million tons of chlorine a year into the atmosphere, volcanos about 36 million tons, and CFCs some 7,500 tons. Now for the life of me, I can't understand how the emission into the atmosphere of 7,500 tons of chlorine from CFCs is somehow going to be deleterious to the health of the citizens of the world, when nature itself releases quantities of chlorine into the atmosphere far beyond that.

So this is the reason for the introduction of this resolution, asking for the appointment of a presidential commission with scientists on both sides—I think that's only fair—so that we can hopefully come to a more balanced judgment as to just how big a problem is the existence of CFCs, and what steps we should take to improve the ability of we citizens to exist on this planet.

At this time I'd like to ask Dr. Hugh Ellsaesser of Livermore Laboratory in California to speak.

Dr. Ellsaesser: I have three brief points that I'd like to make to you today.

The first is that I would like to commend Congressman Dannemeyer for his judgment, his courage, and his statesmanship in introducing this resolution. I have been struggling against the current on this problem for at least 20 years, when it was originally brought up during the SST [Supersonic Transport] study back in the early 1970s.

I am keenly aware how difficult and unrewarding that struggle is. Just last year I presented a paper at the Cato Institute. They had a conference here on global warming in June of last year, and I spoke, using the facetious title, "The Holes in the Ozone Hole," which gives you an idea of

what I had to say. You might be interested to know that in presenting that paper, I had to decline an invitation to go to the White House and talk to the chief executive about the greenhouse warming problem, because that was the only time available. I did get the message out.

The second point I wanted to make is that the environmentalists have been hitting us over the head continuously about looking at the consequences of the actions we take. They want us to make a very detailed study of the environmental consequences before we take any action. Yet they have gone ahead and made this decision to ban CFCs without looking at all at the consequences that it is going to have economically, socially, health-wise—all sorts of consequences it's going to have throughout the world. One of the most acute ones is apt to be the absence of replacements for halons which are used for fire suppression in confined areas such as tanks, battleships, and airplanes. You have probably heard that the failure of the Challenger was due to the banning of asbestos from the little seals that were used in its manufacture. That's what can happen with this monolithic viewpoint.

The third point I would like to make is that even if all of the science about the ozone hole and its depletion from CFCs is correct, all of the hazards that are predicted to occur are already occurring, and are being experienced by people living about 100 miles closer to the equator than us. Now I don't know how you feel about it, but I don't think moving 100 miles south and exposing myself to that additional ultraviolet radiation is a big issue.

Dr. Fred Singer: I would like to say that I support the resolution by Congressman Dannemeyer. I think it is very important to have an impartial discussion—a scientific discussion—among scientists who support one point of view and scientists who support another point of view, so that we can finally get to the bottom of a lot of disagreements that have existed for the past several years.

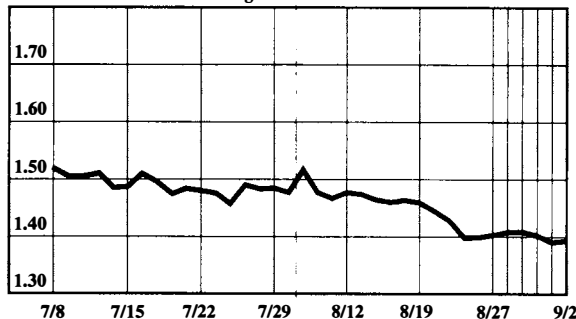
My second point is that these scientific disagreements are really quite serious. They have to do with the question of whether CFCs is an important source, the most important source, the only source, of chlorine in the atmosphere. Secondly, to what extent do they attack ozone? Thirdly, is ozone being depleted in the atmosphere?

These are issues that need to be settled, and they are clearly scientific issues that require data, that require examination of data, and this can only be done by a panel that has scientists on both sides of the issue. I think it is important for the nation to have this kind of a scientific resolution, because, as Congressman Dannemeyer mentioned, the economic consequences of the actions that are being proposed are serious. They will have an impact on everyone, particularly old people that have limited means, and if you have ever tried to get the air conditioner fixed on your car, you know what this means.

Currency Rates

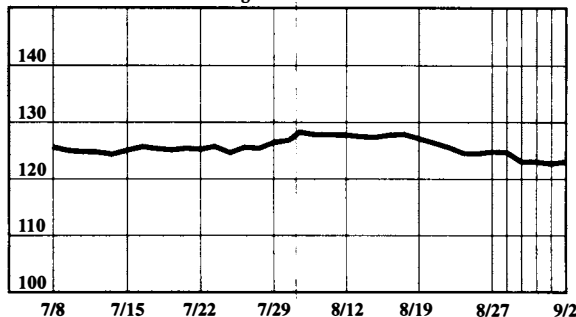
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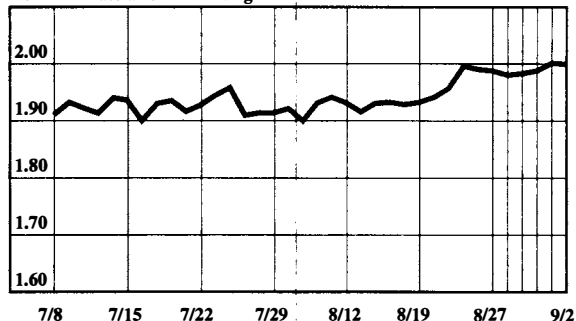
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