

OZONews

A weekly electronic news service on ozone protection & implementation of the Montreal Protocol compiled by:
UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme, Paris

13 August 2001

Table of Contents:

1. **Ozone-Studying Satellite Hits End of Road, Canadian Wind Machine also Faces Demise when NASA Ends \$700M Research Project** (Canada)
2. **Cosmic Rays Linked to Ozone Hole** (UK)
3. **Two ex-officials of Airgas unit charged in scheme** (USA)

1. Ozone-Studying Satellite Hits End of Road, Canadian Wind Machine also Faces Demise when NASA Ends \$700M Research Project (Canada)

NASA will shut down a \$700-million satellite this month, condemning the most powerful instruments ever to study Earth's fragile ozone layer -- one of them Canadian -- to crash and burn. The Upper Atmosphere Research Satellite (UARS) is low on battery power, but still operating 10 years after its launch. NASA, however, wants to save its \$10 million in annual operating costs, and will stop collecting data on Aug. 27. While a new NASA satellite due to launch in 2003 will do similar work, this month's shutdown will leave a gap of more than a year with no measurements. It will also deprive scientists of a chance to compare one satellite with the other as an accuracy check. "Why are we turning off the most powerful satellite ever to measure the ozone layer? It's still working very beautifully," says Canadian researcher Wayne Evans of Trent University... The Canadian machine on UARS is the Wind Imaging Interferometer, or WINDII. It maps how winds in the upper atmosphere circle the globe, carrying with them the pollutants such as chlorine that chew up the ozone layer. "If you don't measure the winds you don't really know how the chemicals are moved around," Mr. Evans said... Other instruments aboard the satellite use microwaves to measure concentrations of pollutants in the upper atmosphere, and measure high-energy particles such as protons arriving from space -- the particles that create the Northern Lights. Mr. Evans says these are still doing valuable work, although a couple of instruments have failed through low power. "There are a lot of changes in the atmosphere that we don't understand," he says. Levels of water vapour and methane -- both powerful "greenhouse" gases that can warm up the world's climate -- keep shifting. So do chlorine and fluorine, gases related to loss of the ozone layer...

Full article @: <http://www.ottawacitizen.com/national/010809/5061877.html>

Source: The Ottawa Citizen, By Tom Spears, 09 August 2001

2. Cosmic Rays Linked to Ozone Hole (UK)

Cosmic rays are eating away at the Earth's protective ozone layer, say Canadian radiation scientists Qing-Bin Lu and Leon Sanche of the University of Sherbrooke. They claim to have discovered an important process underlying the growing ozone hole over the southern hemisphere. But atmospheric scientists are not so sure. Lu and Sanche analysed ozone and cosmic ray data taken from ground stations, weather balloons and satellites. In a forthcoming paper in Physical Review Letters, they report a strong correlation between cosmic ray intensity and ozone depletion across different levels of the atmosphere and different latitudes. They also found that changes in ozone concentration matched fluctuating cosmic ray intensity between 1979 to 1992. They propose that cosmic rays contribute to ozone depletion through their interactions with human-made chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in the atmosphere: electrons created by cosmic rays break down CFC molecules, leading to the production

of chlorine atoms, which in turn break down ozone. Ultraviolet radiation from sunlight destroys ozone in a similar manner...

Full Text @: <http://www.newscientist.com/news/news.jsp?id=ns99991121>

Source: New Scientist, By Greg Miller, 07 August 2001

3. Two Ex-Officials of Airgas Unit Charged in Scheme (USA)

Federal prosecutors in Connecticut have charged two former executives of a subsidiary of Airgas Inc., of Radnor, of illegally avoiding \$20 million in import fees and taxes on imported Freon and of defrauding Airgas Inc. in a \$3.5 million deal.

A former top executive of Airgas has already pleaded guilty to tax-evasion charges related to the scheme.

The scheme, which was investigated by three government agencies, involved using a string of shell corporations to avoid paying excise taxes on imported Freon gas.

A former Airgas executive, Rudi Endres, 57, of Berwyn pleaded guilty in April to income-tax evasion. Endres, who resigned from Airgas, pleaded guilty for failing to pay taxes on payments totaling \$252,000 in 1995 and 1996 from a company controlled by Barry Himes, 58, of Lyme, Conn., and John Mucha, 46, of Guilford, Conn.

From 1994 to 1997, Himes was president of Cryodyne Technologies Inc., a subsidiary of Airgas in Chester, Conn., and Mucha worked for him there.

The indictment charges that, in 1996, while they were still at Cryodyne, Himes and Mucha allegedly misled Airgas officials into buying a shipment of Freon for \$3.5 million from what they said was an independent vendor. In fact, Himes and Mucha were owners of the vendor and had bought the gas for \$170,000, the government alleges.

Full Text @: <http://inq.philly.com/content/inquirer/2001/08/02/business/AIRGAS02.htm>

Source: The Philadelphia Inquirer, 02 August 2001, By Susan Warner

United Nations Environment Programme Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics (UNEP DTIE) OzoneAction Programme provides OzoNews as a free service to help keep readers informed about current news relating to ozone depletion and the implementation of the Montreal Protocol. The goal of OzoNews is to provide information, stimulate discussion and promote cooperation in support of compliance with the Montreal Protocol. With the exception of items written by UNEP and occasional contributions solicited from other organizations, the news is sourced from on-line newspapers, journals and websites. The views expressed in articles written by external authors are solely the viewpoints of those authors and do not represent the policy or viewpoint of UNEP. While UNEP strives to avoid inclusion of misleading or inaccurate information, it is ultimately the responsibility of the reader to evaluate the accuracy of any news article in OzoNews. The citing of commercial technologies, products or services does not constitute endorsement of those items by UNEP.

If you have questions, comments, ideas for future articles, or you want to discontinue receiving this update, please contact: Mrs. Samira de Gobert, Tel. (+33) 1 44371452 Email: sami.degobert@unep.fr

Prepared by: Samira de Gobert, *Research Assistant*
Reviewer: Jim Curlin, *Information Officer*