

AGRICULTURE ALERT

EXPERIMENTAL WEATHER MODIFICATION BILL FAST TRACKING FOR PASSAGE IN U.S. SENATE & HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

By Rosalind Peterson

U.S. Senate Bill Senate Bill 517 and U.S. House Bill 2995, a bill that would allow experimental weather modification by artificial methods and implement a national weather modification policy, does not include agriculture or public oversight, is on the "fast track" to be passed early in 2006.

This bill is designed to implement experimental weather modification. The appointed Board of Directors established by this bill does not include any agricultural, water, EPA, or public representatives, and has no provisions for Congressional, State, County, or public oversight of their actions or expenditures.

Weather Modification may adversely impact agricultural crops and water supplies. If the weather is changed in one state, region or county it may have severe consequences in another region, state or county. And who is going to decide the type of weather modification experimentation and who it will benefit or adversely impact?

This experimental weather modification bill will impact residents across the United States not just in California. Many current and ongoing weather modification programs (47 listed by NOAA in 2005), including the one in Wyoming that is designed to increase the snowpack, may be diverting rainwater away from Oklahoma and Texas, two states that are currently fighting fires caused by a lack of rainfall. We have no idea of what the unintended consequences of the Wyoming action or other experimental weather modification programs might be now or in the future.

In addition to the experimental weather modification programs listed by NOAA, there are both private and ongoing

government sponsored atmospheric testing and heating programs underway in Alaska and across the United States. Alaska Senator Stevens recently received \$50 million funding for Alaska's atmospheric heating program.

All of these unregulated, private, government, and public weather modification programs, may also have unintended synergistic effects. Senate Bill 517 does not address these issues but intends to implement more experimental weather modification programs without a national debate or public oversight.

Artificial weather modification can impact all of us by reducing water supplies, changing agricultural crop production cycles, and water availability. Since most experimental weather modification programs use chemicals released into the atmosphere the public could be subjected increasingly toxic or unknown substances that could adversely impact agricultural crops and trees.

Trymethyl Aluminum (TMA) and barium are just two of the toxic chemicals used in recent atmospheric heating and testing programs. The Alaska H.A.A.R.P. atmospheric heating program has the capability of changing the Jet Stream which could also change our weather.

Many private weather modification companies admit that precipitation effects may be positive or negative. Fog dispersal programs, using dry ice, liquid nitrogen, liquid propane or silver iodide may improve visibility while adversely impacting Redwood Trees along the California coast by depriving them of needed water derived from the fog.

The increasing use of varied chemicals like aluminum can severely impact tree health by depriving trees of water and nutrients normally absorbed through their root systems.

The December 2005 Popular Science Magazine discussed a plan to use

an oil slick to stop hurricanes without noting the adverse environmental impacts of the oil used to cover the ocean.

Popular Science also noted that a private company, Dyn-O-Mat, plans to purchase jets to drop thousands of pounds of a water absorbing chemical powder (unknown substance), into hurricanes to absorb moisture that may dissipate hurricanes. There is no agriculture oversight or public hearings to determine the consequences of this and other actions or to monitor or prevent adverse impacts of this chemical once it falls on the surface of the ocean or on land.

Alaska and other areas across the United States are beginning to feel the impacts of climate change. Enormous changes are being seen in the declining health of native plant and tree communities in many areas across the United States.

NASA noted in an October 2005 newsletter that increasingly persistent contrails are "...trapping warmth in the atmosphere and exacerbating global warming..." NASA goes on to note that "...Any increase in global cloud cover will contribute to long-term changes in Earth's climate. Likewise, any change in Earth's climate may have effects on natural resources..."

Global dimming and persistent contrails that produce man-made clouds may have serious impacts on crop production. A recent corn crop study in Illinois shows that cloud cover reduces corn crop production while direct sunlight increases production.

Senate Bill 517 does not address any of these important issues. Its sole purpose is to establish an experimental weather modification policy without any agriculture or public oversight of private, military and government programs. Without oversight or public hearings agriculture, our natural resources, and watersheds may be negatively impacted. And who will be responsible to determine the synergistic

effects of these programs or pay for unintended disasters created by this experimentation. If these programs change growing seasons and interrupt the pollination process crop losses could be substantial.

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