

## Backgrounder:

### Ozone Depletion

The earth's ozone layer is being destroyed by chlorine and bromine released into the stratosphere by a group of chemical compounds known as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons. The depletion of the ozone layer will result in skin cancers, eye damage and crop destruction as increasing amounts of ultraviolet radiation from the sun reach the earth's surface.

Already, British scientists and NASA have identified a hole in the Ozone Layer over Antarctica and a thin area of the ozone layer over the Northern Hemisphere has been observed.

Alarmed by the rapid depletion of the ozone layer, more than 40 western nations signed the 1987 Montreal Protocol which calls for a 50% reduction of CFC emissions by 1999.

But will the action announced with great fanfare be enough to save the Ozone Layer?

Greenpeace says NO!

Scientist Joe Farman says NO!

The United States Environmental Protection Agency says NO!

"A 50% cut in world consumption of CFCs will not be enough to save the ozone layer ... The emissions of CFC are so large that they are accumulating rapidly. If we wish the amounts of CFCs to *remain constant*, we must cut emissions so that they are equal to the losses, that is to say roughly 15% of the current level," said Joe Farman in The New Scientist November 1987.

Joe Farman, a member of the British Antarctic Survey, is credited with identifying the hole in the ozone layer.

In 1988 the EPA said to maintain stratospheric chlorine at current levels would require a 100% phaseout of the Montreal CFCs with 100% participation.

In other words, just to maintain the ozone layer in its present state there must be an immediate 100% reduction of CFC production.

### 100% NOW CUT CFCs

Greenpeace has called for an immediate 100% cut in CFC production and proposes the immediate creation of recycling facilities to service existing refrigeration devices while new technology is introduced. In other areas, such as food packaging, cleaning solvents and insulation a switch over can be made to alternative products.

The government plans for control of CFCs and Halons are based more on the needs of industry than the needs of the earth. The Greenpeace plan is viable and necessary.