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## Irvine council votes landmark ban on all chemicals that harm ozone

By Drew Silvern  
Herald Examiner staff writer

In a move hailed by environmentalists and decried by many high-tech manufacturers, the Irvine City Council voted 4-1 last night to severely restrict the use of ozone-depleting chemicals within the city's limits.

The measure, which will affect everything from the way air conditioners are serviced to how computers are manufactured, is one of the nation's toughest.

"This ordinance is a landmark," said Irvine Mayor Larry Agran, who first proposed the ordinance last May. "It's the most far-reaching of its kind in the country."

Opponents of the measure, among them Hughes Aircraft and Rockwell International, both of whom have large operations in Irvine, said the measure will only hamper their efforts to phase out ozone-depleting chemicals.

"This is a global issue and it requires global solutions," said Alex Safri, a Hughes spokesman.

The Irvine law, which will take effect July 1, 1990, will ban several of the most frequently used chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs, which are widely used as solvents in high-tech manufacturing processes for foam containers, home insulation and refrigerants.

Only companies that can show there is absolutely no alternative will be granted exemptions, Agran said.

All refrigerants, such as those used in auto air conditioners, will have to be recycled rather than discarded, and there will be restrictions on the use of Halon fire extinguishers.

In recent years, studies have found that the release of CFCs into the atmosphere has begun to rapidly deplete the Earth's ozone layer.

Ozone in the upper atmosphere filters out solar radiation that has been linked to skin cancer, cataracts and a host of other health and environmental problems.

California contributes 5 percent of total global emissions of chlorofluorocarbons, about 130 million pounds per year, said Julie May, a researcher for San Francisco-based Citizens for a Better Environment.

In recent years, the United States and other industrialized nations have entered into tentative agreements to reduce CFC emissions.

But yesterday before the vote Mayor Agran said those measures hadn't gone far enough fast enough.

"With the accumulation of scientific evidence documenting that the depletion is much more rapid than was originally predicted, we don't have much time to waste," he said.

Agran said municipalities should not wait for federal authorities to act.

"If we have to wait for these guys, we might as well kiss off the future of the globe," he said.