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# California city puts ozone-eaters on diet

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By Bruce Buursma  
Chicago Tribune

IRVINE, Calif.—This southern California suburb on Tuesday became the first city in the country to approve a sweeping ordinance aimed at sharply reducing the release of chloroflourocarbons and other ozone-depleting compounds into the atmosphere.

The measure, stoutly opposed by a number of the city's high-technology and aerospace-related firms, calls on businesses to meet a series of stringent environmental requirements by next July 1 or face misdemeanor charges.

"We're not acting in splendid isolation," said the chief sponsor of the ordinance, Irvine Mayor Larry Agran. "We must act—not just symbolically but substantively. We can't view ourselves as simply sideline spectators in this global drama."

The ordinance, approved 4-1 after council members listened to more than two hours of criticism of the plan, calls for the banning or recycling of such chloroflourocarbon-dependent substances as Freon in automobile air-conditioners and degreasers and solvents used in the cleaning of metals and electronic components.

The compound, called CFC, also is widely used in manufacturing insulating materials and foam cushions produced for bedding and furniture.

The action follows a decade of progressive measures in Irvine, including the imposition of a curbside recycling program, a hazardous material disposal ordinance and a law regulating second-hand tobacco smoke.

It also comes in the context of widening concern in southern California over air quality in the sprawling Los Angeles Basin, which has nearly 13 million people and the nation's most polluted skies.

Earlier this year, the regional Air Quality Management District approved a wide-ranging plan designed to bring the area into compliance with federal clean-air standards. That plan, which still requires state and federal sanction, addresses the use of ozone-depleting compounds in paints and solvents, as well as the smog-producing emissions from automobiles and lawnmowers.

The Irvine ordinance does not address the problem of auto emis-

sions. While dismissed by detractors as a merely symbolic environmental gesture, the measure is likely to raise implications far beyond its borders in this rapidly growing and prosperous area of Orange County, south of Los Angeles.

"Other cities will jump on the bandwagon," predicted Jeb Bruggmann, the Cambridge, Mass., director of the East Coast office for the Center for Innovative Diplomacy, an agency working with local governments on a stratospheric protection accord.

The ordinance asserts that recapturing and recycling Freon from automobile air-conditioners would eliminate nearly 20 percent of all CFC chemicals used nationally.

A California state legislator also has recently raised deep concerns about Freon, suggesting that he may introduce a bill in the state Senate to ban automobile air-conditioning units throughout the state.

The Irvine ordinance would grant businesses the possibility of exemption if they are able to show compelling environmental or economic reasons for non-compliance.

The legislation creates an environmental program coordinator, who will supervise the city project.

"Our ordinance, if implemented here and in every major population center throughout the world, would ultimately curtail ozone depletion and allow the processes of stratospheric repair—requiring hundreds of years—to begin," Mayor Agran said.

But one council member who opposed the measure, Sally Sheridan, said it imposes an unfair burden on businesses in exchange for an environmental benefit that is so "insignificant as to be immeasurable."

In testimony before Tuesday night's vote, Hughes Aircraft engineer Alex Sapre contended that "CFCs are a global concern and therefore need a global approach to a solution." He added, "If each local community would [pass] an ordinance like this, the result would be a diversion of resources."

Another foe, Ron Osburn of Rockwell International, implored the council members to "be a little patient," contending that the imposition of the environmental requirements could end up "hurting our economy."