

International Symposium To Focus On Ozone Layer and Climate Protection Nov. 7-10, 2011

WASHINGTON, D.C., Oct. 27 — An international conference, “2011 IYC Symposium on Stratospheric Ozone and Climate Change,” will be convened here Nov. 7-10. This event focuses on the outcomes of the 1987 Montreal Protocol, an international treaty to reduce ozone depleting substances in the atmosphere. It also celebrates the 1990 signing of the Clean Air Act Amendment (CAAA) of 1990 by George Bush, 41st President of the United States, designed to protect air quality and environment.

The four-day symposium features presentations and policy statements by presidents of major scientific societies, policymakers and noted scientists from government, higher education, industry and nonprofit organizations. All sessions will be held at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center Atrium Ballroom at 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., just a few blocks from the White House.

“This symposium will be an important event on climate change,” says Renyi Zhang, professor of atmospheric sciences at Texas A&M and the event organizer. “Because this is the International Year of Chemistry (IYC), we hope to raise public awareness of how clean-air issues affect atmospheric conditions all over the world, and how billions of people can be adversely impacted,” Zhang adds. “The discussions and collaborations expected at these meetings could lead to policies that will have far-reaching consequences.

“The conference will recognize the contributions of scientists, industry and governmental agencies to identify and counteract the threats from halocarbons posted to the Earth’s ozone layer,” Zhang notes. “We hope these collaborations may offer useful lessons that might help address the larger challenges of climate change.”

A special section of the symposium, scheduled for Nov. 8, commemorates the 21st anniversary of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. Sponsored by the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M, the Tuesday morning event features a video presentation from President Bush and a discussion by key players involved in the historic act, one of the former president's many significant accomplishments. The Bush School is a co-sponsor of the symposium.

The amendment, signed by Bush in his second year in office, broke a 13-year legislative logjam on the issue. It has resulted in reduced sulfur dioxide levels by 10 million tons to below 1980 levels and toxic air emissions by more than 75 percent and has eliminated 30 million tons of dangerous chemicals and pollutants from the atmosphere. A 2010 report from the Environmental Protection Agency found that the amendments of 1990 "prevented 23,000 Americans from dying prematurely and averted more than 1.7 million incidences of asthma attacks, prevented 67,000 incidences of chronic bronchitis and prevented more than 4 million lost work days." The report concluded that the benefits from the Clean Air Act exceeded their costs by a margin of 4 to 1. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments added provisions to phase out production of chemicals that deplete the ozone layer.

"There is increasing evidence that the benefits of the Montreal Protocol and the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 extend also to climate protection because the industrially produced chemicals responsible for depleting the ozone layer are also important greenhouse gases, which potentially contribute to global warming," Zhang adds.

Keynote speakers include Ralph Cicerone, president of National Academy of Sciences; Mario J. Molina, 1995 Nobel laureate in chemistry; Robert T. Watson,

chief scientific adviser of Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of the United Kingdom and former chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; C. Boyden Gray, White House Counsel (1989-93); Susan Solomon, winner of the National Medal of Science; and William K. Reilly, Administrator of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (1989-93).

The opening session will feature the presidents of four scientific societies giving their statements on environmental protection and climate change: Nancy Jackson, president, American Chemical Society; Michael McPhaden, president of the American Geophysical Union; Jonathan Malay, president of the American Meteorological Society; and Michael Jarraud, secretary general of the World Meteorological Organization.

Funding agencies for the symposium include the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, NASA, the World Meteorological Organization and World Climate Research Program and Texas A&M and its College of Geosciences, the Division of Research and Vice President for Research, along with the Bush School. In addition to Texas A&M, the primary co-sponsors of this event are American Meteorological Society, American Geophysical Union and American Chemical Society.

For more about the conference including a list of speakers, go to <http://2011-iyco3.org/>

For more information about the Bush School and its role, go to <http://bush.tamu.edu/events/climatechange/>

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