

List Cites 200 Culprits in Ozone Loss

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Environmentalists issued a list yesterday of about 200 industrial companies in California that it described as major offenders in contributing to ozone loss, with a major San Jose employer topping the list.

The list was compiled by the San Francisco-based Citizens for a Better Environment, using information released by the state Environmental Affairs Agency.

The IBM manufacturing facility in south San Jose ranked No. 1 for releasing roughly 1.47 million pounds of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) into the air in 1987. The plant uses CFCs to clean parts of the computer disk drives it manufactures. About 8,500 people work at the facility.

CFCs are generally considered to reduce the atmosphere's ozone layer, which protects the Earth from dangerous ultraviolet rays.

"IBM is far and away the largest contributor to the ozone destruction of any company in California, and, we believe, in the whole country," said Ted Smith, director of the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition.

IBM's emissions totaled 26 percent of the releases documented in the statewide report, Smith said.

Smith also criticized the company for failing to take a leadership role on the ozone issue. Other companies have found ways to clean

their manufactured goods with CFC substitutes, including one made from orange peel, he said.

Ray Kerby, director of environmental programs at IBM in San Jose, acknowledged serious concern for the Earth's ozone layer but

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defended the firm's progress in dealing with allegedly harmful emissions. He said IBM has cut its CFC emissions in San Jose by about 40 percent since 1986.

"IBM's goal is to eliminate, as fast as possible, the use of chlorofluorocarbons," Kerby said, but he offered no timetable, saying that it was impossible to predict how soon safe substitutes can be developed.

Kerby also questioned IBM's alleged contribution to the problem, noting that air conditioners and foam containers are greater sources of CFCs, a contention supported by the environmentalists' report.

"We're in no way the major contributor either in California or the U.S. of chlorofluorocarbons," he said.

The 1987 figures showed that IBM released about 1 million pounds more of CFCs than its near-

est rival, Bently Laboratories of Irvine, a medical instrument manufacturer. The figure cited for IBM was "essentially accurate," Kerby said.

The environmentalists' report noted that industrial firms were singled out for criticism and that manufacturing emissions caused only 20 percent of the ozone's destruction.

In addition to CFC emissions, the report tracked releases of two lesser ozone-depleting chemicals, carbon tetrachloride and methyl chloroform, also known as TCA.

The environmentalists' list reads like a "Who's Who" of Bay Area high tech and aerospace firms. Other firms listed in the top 20 include Lockheed Missiles & Space Co. in Sunnyvale, the Hewlett-Packard Co. facility in Santa Rosa and Raychem Corp. in Menlo Park.

Some environmentalists tried to enter IBM's San Jose plant yesterday to ask officials to stop CFC emissions within a year, but the group was stopped at the gate by guards.

The environmentalists said they hoped to generate interest in the issue in time for an international protest this Saturday.

Scientists warn that depletion of the ozone layer could cause an overall rise in global temperatures, causing increased smog, droughts and acid rain.

The increased ultraviolet radiation also causes higher incidences of skin cancer and cataracts.