

[Clive Efford Member of Parliament for Eltham
Reduction in UK HFC emissions]

Good morning everyone

It is a pleasure to be here - and I would like to thank the organisers for the invitation to address this conference

When I was received the invitation, I wondered - why me?

I was told it was because I am one of only a few politicians in Europe urging action to eradicate HFCs

What began as a modest bill to poke the UK government - in the hope of provoking it into action - has led to wider recognition.

What prompted me to action was a news report I heard on the radio.

[HFCs are 20,000 times more harmful in terms of global warming than CO2]

It was about a report published by the Environment Investigation Agency regarding the use of HFCs in eleven of the major supermarkets chains in the UK

The case they made against HFCs made me question the wisdom of not taking immediate action.

What is more, the supermarket industry itself seemed to accept that government action is necessary

As you can see from the slide - the case for action is very compelling

[Concentrations of HFCs in the atmosphere are rising rapidly]
(*Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report 2005*)

HFCs replaced Ozone-depleting CFCs under the Montreal Protocol.

The use of F gases is growing.

[IPCC predict a tripling of HFCs from 0.4 billion tons CO2-eq to 1.2 tonnes CO2-eq in 2015]
(*Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report 2005*)

Unlike CO2 HFCs are deliberately manufactured.

A 2007 IPCC report warns that emissions of HFCs are expected to grow substantially in the future.

We need to stop this trend.

And that means we must act now.

In 2005 the amount of HFC emitted by the UK's supermarket sector alone was the equivalent of 2 million tonnes of CO₂.

Equal to flying in a plane from London to New York over 2.5 million times.

[Why legislation is necessary?]

We are expecting an estimated 3 percent annual growth in HFC emissions.

By 2050 HFCs will constitute 12 percent of the UK's total Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

Today they are less than two percent.

Based on annual 3 percent growth from 2006 rates, phasing out HFCs has the potential to save half of one billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalence between now and 2050

Over 75 percent of the UK's annual greenhouse gas emissions

Is there an alternative to legislating?

Some have argued for alternatives to legislation

They want to make current technology more energy efficient -

Reduce leakage

They claim that equipment that uses alternatives to HFCs is less energy efficient

They also claim that they are more expensive to run

Bizarrely – some have argued that the technology is mainly in Europe

As if the UK is not

My responses to these are

That energy efficiency is something they should strive for regardless of what gas they use in their refrigeration systems

That reducing leakage is not sufficient

Replacement with non GWP coolants completely eradicates emissions

Claims that equipment which uses environmentally friendly coolants is less energy efficient is in dispute

But even if this is so – demand will lead to improvement in this technology -
Improving energy efficiency and reducing running costs

Demand will require manufacturers to be more competitive in the products they offer

Similarly if the technology is mainly in continental Europe I would suggest that this is because there is not yet demand in the UK

The best example I can give where legislation has played an important role in the introduction of catalytic converters into cars

I am a former member of the UK Parliamentary Select Committee for Transport – and during my time on that committee we held an inquiry into the – “Car of the Future”

We received evidence from people involved in developing new technology for cars – including catalytic converters – they explained that the introduction of catalytic converters was largely as a result of regulation

The industry had responded to regulation and invested resources to meet the new challenge in the market

Technology improved costs were kept to a minimum -

And catalytic converters were introduced without any significant impact on the market

Regulation will do the same with HFCs

[Why pick on supermarkets?]

Biggest users of HFCs in UK

50 percent of HFC emissions come from supermarket refrigeration

25 percent of the carbon footprint of supermarkets come from the cooling gases used in their refrigeration systems - and that is without calculating the energy used to power them

Moreover – the industry themselves invited this attention

In 2007 they jointly announced their intention to move away from HFCs

It was the investigation into their progress carried out by the EIA that I heard reported on the radio that prompted me into action

They investigated 11 of the biggest supermarket chains in the UK

The findings were disappointing

I will not name names – I am not here to promote controversy – or name and shame

The best performing of the supermarket chains had only six of its stores converted to carbon based gases

Can the supermarkets afford to invest in these changes at this time of economic turmoil

Last week Tesco reported half year profits to be up £1.6 billion

Asda's like for like sales were up 7.2% on 2008 figures - in August this year

Sainsbury reported this month that its half year figures are up 5.5%

The Co-operative Group has posted a 17% rise in first-half profit, boosted by its food business - also this month

This is a sector that is having a good recession

What ever their arguments against eradicating HFCs it cannot be the current economic downturn

The supermarket industry in the UK has indicated that it is willing to take steps to remove HFCs from their refrigeration units

This is a highly competitive market where companies are constantly trying to exploit advantages over one another

They themselves have indicated that they want the government to create a playing field

The clear indication is that they will feel more inclined to invest time and resources necessary to move away from HFCs if they are confident that the whole industry is also required to do the same in the same timescale

My bill is seeking to build on this consensus within the industry and bring about a swift change in relation to the use of F gasses in the refrigeration systems of the large supermarket chains

Where next with the campaign?

My bill is what we call a ten minute rule bill

My aim is to assist those - such as the EIA - to focus the spotlight on the issue of F gasses

My bill will not become law

The purpose of tabling it was to get the opportunity to make a statement on the issue in parliament

On the back of that we have set up a meeting with the minister together with representatives of the supermarkets to discuss how to take the issue forwards

A new parliament will start in November

There will be a new energy bill in the parliament

I will hope that we can look for an amendment to that bill if the government does not take on the issue

There is also the possibility of a new private members bill

But in our negotiations with the government we will also be seeking to force it to ensure that the issue is discussed at Copenhagen

I will campaign to bring about change in the UK

But the issue of climate change is one that recognises no national boundaries

And that is why - I believe - that the organisers of this conference invited me so over to you

Thank you

Other large corporations have already indicated their - intention to move away from HFCs

A UN initiative called Refrigerants Naturally involves Greenpeace, Coca cola Unilever and McDonalds

So the argument that the technology is not available

Denmark and Sweden implemented have tax and refund schemes where they are taxed on their HFC but receive a refund for the amount of HFC they return for disposal

Denmark has banned HFCs from new equipment

Austria has banned HFCs from domestic use

Air conditioning 5 – 10 percent of UK energy use