

EPA Reaches Settlement with Safeway to Reduce Ozone Depleting Refrigerants

The article I read was about Safeway's refrigeration harming the ozone layer, and how this issue will be fixed. The United States Environmental Protection Agency and Safeway reached a settlement over Safeway's Violations of the Clean Air Act Title VI. 659 of Safeway's store have been leaking a chemical known as hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) into the atmosphere. HCFC is a greenhouse gas that comes from many industrial sized refrigerators, HCFC is 1,800 times worse than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas. Once in the air the HCFC quickly starts to deplete the oxygen from the ozone layer. The O₃ gas in our atmosphere shields us from many dangerous UV rays and without it the UV rays would harm most plants and animals. The HCFC is also the main reason why there are gaps in the ozone layer each year, around the Arctic, and Antarctic areas. The settlement the EPA reached will cost Safeway \$600,000 dollars in fines and another 4.1 million dollars to re-equip all of their stores with environmentally friendly appliances, this is estimated to reduce future annual HCFC emissions by 100,000 pounds. Safeway is not the only company that has this problem, they are just one of the first to change, it is expected that the same things will be happening to similar companies very soon.

This was a very interesting article, and I was very surprised that we don't hear about this sort of thing more often. I was shocked to find out that even though it has been known for well over twenty years that HCFC causes ozone depletion and there have been laws passed to stop the release of HCFC into the atmosphere, many companies, not just Safeway, are still using appliances that release HCFC. I think it is great that the EPA is able to stop this from happening,