



THE ALLIANCE FOR CO₂ SOLUTIONS

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Time is up for choice of sustainable refrigerant in cars

Brussels, 4 June 2008:-- Ahead of key announcements at a major car industry event in Phoenix, Arizona, next week, Automotive Manufacturers are being urged to choose sustainable CO₂ Technology in their next generation air conditioning, thereby dropping tests of less efficient, potentially toxic and flammable chemicals.

Many questions remain unsolved concerning HFO 1234-yf, chemical refrigerant for vehicle air conditioning jointly proposed by DuPont and Honeywell. This new substance is potentially toxic, with unknown decomposition effects in the atmosphere and poorer efficiency than current R-134a based systems.

Moreover, the new chemical refrigerant is flammable. As shown by independent tests, in case of a vehicle front-end collision, the refrigerant could lead to an additional fire inside the passenger cabin.

"There is already a safe, sustainable, and global solution ready to be part of air conditioning systems today, namely CO₂. We should proceed quickly to this transition, and avoid running the additional safety and environmental risks posed by chemicals for the sake of short-term economic benefits", concludes Petter Nekså, from Norway's leading Energy Research Centre SINTEF.

However, chemical giants are strongly promoting the substance in a bid to delay for as long as possible, a decision by car manufacturers in favour of the natural refrigerant CO₂.

"Marketed over years by chemical companies, CFCs, HCFCs and HFCs have proved devastating for the ozone layer and the world's climate. These companies now have a historic opportunity to avoid past mistakes and stop promoting a new chemical with unknown effects on the atmosphere. This new chemical is potentially toxic and will prolong unnecessarily the lifespan of highly polluting R-134a used today. At least 3% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions is at stake", says Wolfgang Lohbeck, Head of Special Projects at Greenpeace.

Background

Worth \$14.5 billion, the battle for the car air-conditioning market emanates from the decision by the EU to phase out the current refrigerant HFC-134a. The German Automotive Association (VDA) has already opted for CO₂ as a refrigerant. Other manufacturers worldwide need to decide soon.

The Alliance for CO₂ Solutions is a grouping of organisations that support the use of CO₂ Technology in car air conditioning. Its supporters include Greenpeace, Deutsche Umwelthilfe, Ixetic, Konvekta, SINTEF and Shecco.