

UA Scientist's SST Cancer Report Declared Suppressed

WASHINGTON (AP) — Chemical reactions to exhausts from a fleet of supersonic transports could cause 10,000 new cases of skin cancer yearly in the United States, a noted research scientist has told two members of Congress.

The two legislators charge the Nixon administration had suppressed the finding before the Senate's vote yesterday killing a \$290 million appropriation.

The prediction reportedly was made to the Department of Transportation Monday by Dr. James E. McDonald, a professor of atmospheric physics at the University of Arizona. He worked on an SST climate and weather modification panel of the National Academy of Sciences.

After that Monday meeting the department issued a press release quoting the panel's head

as saying it had found no "crimes against the environment" to lay at the door of the SST and that it could not recommend that work on SST prototype planes be delayed.

In a joint statement given to The Associated Press before the Senate vote, Sen. William Proxmire, D-Wis., and Rep. Morris K. Udall, D-Ariz., declared:

"These findings by a reputable scientist assigned this study by the National Academy of Science are much too important to be ignored.

"We believe they are more than sufficient reason to withhold further funding of the SST until they are either disproved or found in error in some significant respect."

But Surgeon General Jesse L. Steinfeld took issue with the cancer cause suggestion.

In a statement, he cautioned

against use of data gathered at a time when scientists knew less about the relation between skin cancer and sunlight.

Proxmire and Udall, however, said McDonald's findings should be taken most seriously.

In the process of his investigation, they said, he disproved a much publicized fear about the consequences of SST flights: That a fleet of the planes could pump so much water vapor into the atmosphere that resulting ice crystals could cause significant changes in weather and climate.

McDonald reported the upper atmosphere is too dry and too warm to allow such crystals to form in large quantities.

But the water vapor ejected by a large SST fleet, he said, could have another serious side effect.