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Smattering of Activists Protest Geoengineering, 'Chemtrails'

by Eli Kintisch on February 20, 2010 6:37 PM | [Permanent Link](#)

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SAN DIEGO—I wasn't the only one underwhelmed by the size of the anti-geoengineering "rally," as it was billed. The event, slated for this morning to coincide with one of three sessions on [geoengineering](#) at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (which publishes *ScienceNOW*), focused on the chemtrails [conspiracy theory](#): the idea that the government is spraying particles into the sky in a clandestine program to reverse global warming. It was organized by California activists and held across the street from the convention center.

"This is the [blank] turnout?" said Ray Switzer, a local activist in sunglasses. "I'm appalled. This is a disease on our country. This is the wildest thing. I thought there would be people from all over the country here. The apathy is pathetic. They could care less if I'm getting sprayed like a cockroach."



The advertisement for the event had blared:

"ALERT- Geo-Engineering Scientists to Meet in San Diego ACTIVISTS, STAY TUNED at this URL in THIS SECTION"

Beforehand, I'd spoken to the organizer, a multimedia producer and farmer named Mauro Oliveira. I'd asked him what chemtrails were. "The government or whoever" was adding compounds to certain aircraft exhausts, and evidence of its existence was found in elevated levels of aluminum particles recorded by activists using home test kits, he explained. The protest had attracted about a dozen people, about half of them with video or digital cameras.



A small prayer circle had convened off to the side; someone played a drum, and a long smoking wooden pipe was passed around. Several girls joined the protest and held signs on the periphery.



Oliviera used a megaphone to call to passersby. Among his allegations was that Ken Caldiera, a geochemist at the Carnegie Institution who has led much of the geoengineering research efforts, was a "weapons-optimization scientist" (more allegations here). "Geoengineering will reduce the effects of the [greenhouse] emissions, but it will do nothing to lower the emissions," they said. Passersby were given handouts describing "Alarming Local Lab Tests Reveal Accumulated Contamination:

Another handout suggested that citizens check the skies for "persistent jet trails/man-made clouds," and if any were seen, to "Protect Your Family and Pets" by using "a respirator mask designed to remove toxic chemicals from

the air."

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"I worked at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory with Edward Teller and Lowell Wood," Caldera said later, citing the father of the H-Bomb and his acolyte. He feared the use of geoengineering as a weapon, not schemed to develop it as one. "They couldn't get money for this work—I doubt anyone else can."


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