

U.S. Experts Skeptical Of Rainmaking Efforts

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WASHINGTON —

Government scientists were skeptical Tuesday of weather modification projects, but a former mayor of Altus said he has seen them work.

Rainmaking is "less than well advanced in the state of the arts at this point in time," said one of the skeptics, Dr. Alfred J. Eggers Jr. of the National Science Foundation.

"I believe as sure as there is a God in heaven that weather modification can be one of the greatest things on this earth," said former Altus Mayor Hoyt Shadid, district manager for the Mountain Park Conservancy District.

Their views were expressed during hearings by a Senate Commerce subcommittee on three weather modification bills by Sen. Henry Bellmon.

The government men, including Dr. Robert M. White, head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, (NOAA), said science doesn't know enough about rainmaking (he called it precipitation enhancement) to warrant large-scale projects.

Shadid, almost shouting, said, "I personally have witnessed them seeding clouds and I personally have witnessed the rain." He said weather modification can't come into "full bloom" without

federal assistance.

He said that the Altus region had a severe drouth, "the worst in years," in 1970, when there were only 10 inches of rain the whole year.

The next September, after cloud-seeding operations, there were 10 inches in that one month.

But the scientists saw the issue through different eyes.

White said drouth is brought about by weather phenomena that occur on a continental or global scale.

"In order to break a drouth, it would be necessary to modify weather conditions on a scale so large as to be beyond any present scientific or technical ability.

Although the "odds are that" cloud seeding causes rain, he said, scientists cannot be sure that it doesn't result in less rain.

Glenn Sullivan, vice president of an Oklahoma City engineering firm, said that in 1972 cloud-seeding activities in five southwestern

counties in Oklahoma produced an estimated 20-1 benefit-cost ratio — for each \$1 spent, there resulted \$20 in benefits.

Bellmon is the author of three bills which would:

—Establish a commission that would study what the government should do to foster and develop weather modification.

—Create a long-term program of research and experimentation to determine whether weather modification is feasible.

—Provide financial assistance from the government to the states to carry out operational weather modification projects now.