

Weather Modification 'Works'

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That's the Report on Results From Scientific Study

Two decades of wrangling over whether it is practical to increase rainfall by seeding clouds with silver iodide crystals may be coming to an end in Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Water Resources Board has received a scientific study that could bring meteorologists, research scientists, federal agencies and farmers into sufficient accord to obtain good results.

The water board contracted for the study by Dr. John McCarthy and Dr. Randall R. Bensch several months ago. McCarthy is associate professor, School of

Meteorology, University of Oklahoma, and visiting scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, Boulder, Colo.

Bensch is assistant professor of mathematics, Northeast Louisiana University, Monroe, La.

"Weather modification can and does work," the report begins. "However, to apply it in a useful productive way is difficult, worthy of the most intense planning, implementation and evaluation."

Conflicts have arisen between Oklahoma farmers and federal scientists who sought

to conduct rain enhancement operations and research evaluations in the same areas at the same time.

"The Expansion of Weather Modification in Oklahoma, a Time

Ferdie J. Deering

for Action" is the report title. It summarizes cloud seeding research, operations, federal actions and pending legislation.

A recent meeting of the statewide weather modification advisory committee of the water board brought representatives of various groups together to hear

Dr. McCarthy discuss his studies and report.

There appeared to be general agreement that the time has come to initiate a comprehensive weather modification program in Oklahoma, based upon scientific weather data, research and evaluations.

Apprehension was expressed regarding trends toward federal management of procedures, without assurance of local control of operations.

Observations cited by McCarthy indicate that federal agencies lack personnel, mechanisms, know-how, funding and leadership for planning and operating

weather modification for local needs.

Several agencies are now involved in weather modification research. A national advisory board has recommended establishment of "The National Weather Resources Management Program" to consolidate them.

"Such a consolidation does not imply a preference for in-house federal activity," McCarthy's report states.

"Most of the operational experience and much of the research and development competence that exists today is outside of government."

It is suggested that the aim of federal weather management programs would be to develop "a partnership between the federal government and non-federal members of the weather modification community."

A bill (S 829) intended to accomplish this was introduced in Congress last March by Sen. Henry Bellmon, R-Okla.

Pat Harty, Denver, said the Interior Department's Water and

Power Resources Service (formerly Bureau of Reclamation) has been authorized to use up to \$1 million to finance rain augmentation research in six southwestern states. Oklahoma has applied for \$200,000 of these funds.

McCarthy's study recommended creation and funding of a weather modification division by the Water Resources Board. This division would set up a planning committee "to deal with controversy, policy and design" of a state weather resources program and "finally to implement it."

The report also called for immediate initiation of a study of climatology in Oklahoma, geared to weather modification, along with strengthening of rules and regulations governing weather activities. Better relationships of the Water Board with scientific groups and professional weather modification organizations was advised.

No action was taken on the study. Jim Barnett, acting executive director of the Water Resources Board, said comments recorded would be relayed to the board when it reviews the study.

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