

COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES

MAY 1990

MEDIA TOURS BY CONSULTANTS

- Simon Turner of Healthy Buildings International (HBI) conducted a media tour on indoor air quality in Des Moines and Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Included in his media interviews were the Des Moines Register, Cedar Rapids Gazette, two radio and six television appearances. A report and available media coverage are enclosed.

Turner also was featured in a Newsday article on sick-buildings and Gray Robertson's views on the airline smoking ban were carried in Business Traveler International. Copies of both articles are enclosed.

Robertson wrote a letter to Virgin Atlantic Airways, advising that their advertisement in the New York Times was misleading in its characterization that "the average smoker smokes 8 cigarettes during a 6-hour journey to London. So does the average non-smoker." In the letter, he pointed out that the recent Department of Transportation study reported virtually no difference in particulate levels between the non-smoking section of flights with smoking sections and flights, like those on Virgin Airways, where smoking was not permitted. A copy of Virgin Airways' response is enclosed.

- A clip from Dr. David Weeks' earlier media tour in Florida on the McGill Symposium is enclosed.

THIRD PARTY AND ALLIED ACTIVITIES

- Robert McIntyre, director of Citizens for Tax Justice (CTJ), published an op-ed in the New York Times. McIntyre argues against consumer excise tax increases on ordinary families, noting that an increase in cigarette taxes "would hit middle-income families 21 times as hard as the very rich." A copy of the op-ed, that also appeared in the St. Paul Pioneer Press, is enclosed.

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- o **Citizens for Tax Justice (CTJ) hosted about 100 congressional and think-tank policy makers at a "Growth & Equity: Tax Policy Challenges for the 1990's" conference. Sessions on tax progressivity, consumption taxes and communicating about taxes featured speakers such as Sen. Bill Bradley (D-NJ), making a strong case for progressive taxation; Rep. Byron Dorgan (D-ND); CTJ Executive Director Bob McIntyre; AFL-CIO Legislative Director Robert McGlotten; and David Brockway, former chief of staff to the Joint Committee on Taxation. The proceedings, which were broadcast in their entirety on C-Span, will be published and distributed on Capitol Hill.**

- o **The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) entered into the tax battle with release of its report on the impact of federal tax policy on working women and children. Press coverage of the report's release was good and included UPI and CNN, which used the study's release as its lead story. CLUW President Joyce Miller also sent copies of the report to all Members of Congress and has distributed an op-ed for placement in major daily newspapers. Copies of the study and media clips are enclosed.**

- o **The Economic Policy Institute's (EPI) study "Are Americans on a Consumption Binge?" continues to receive media attention. The report refutes the notion that Americans have been overconsuming and undersaving, and thus, that Congress should raise consumption taxes such as excise taxes. Clips that supplement last month's report are enclosed.**

- o **The League of Rural Voters continues to distribute information and their endorsement of the American Agriculture Movements excise tax study examining the impact on rural Americans. Enclosed you will find additional press clips and the League's op-ed.**

- o **Clips from the matte mailing conducted by the American Agriculture Movement on their study of the impact of consumer excise taxes on rural Americans continue. Enclosed are additional results.**

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- o The AFL-CIO issued a statement applauding Administration and Congressional efforts to deal with the budget deficit, but cautioning that "if revenues are to be raised, let it be done by a fair and progressive tax system. That means a dependence upon a fairer more progressive income tax system rather than turning toward regressive excise taxes."
- o Arguing against "user fees," David Gay, a professor of economics at the University of Arkansas, published an op-ed in the Arkansas Democrat. A copy is enclosed.
- o The World Federation of Ex-Political Prisoners, an allied organization of the National Vietnam Veterans Coalition, used a press conference in Miami, Florida, as an opportunity to voice its opposition to increasing tobacco, alcohol, wine, distilled spirits and soft drink taxes. The group, with a large Cuban American constituency, called for progressive revenue-raising measure rather than shifting the burden onto the "shoulders of those who can least afford it."
- o The Flint Journal ran a poll asking readers if cigarette taxes should be raised. The response was an overwhelming no, and the paper published some of the comments they received; a copy is enclosed. Of interest, Flint was a test market for the Consumer Tax Alliance's anti-excise tax ads earlier this year.
- o New Jersey Citizens Action (NJCA), a state-based tax reform group, released its study, "The New Jersey Tax System: It's Broken. How to Fix It." The report examined the current tax system, the Governor's proposals, and NJCA's recommended tax plan. Newspapers throughout the state covered the release. The group plans to follow-up with the media and will participate in editorial board briefings with key state newspapers. A copy of the study and some of the media clips are enclosed.
- o Professor Dwight Lee's op-ed, "Smokers are paying their own way - and then some" was published in the Chicago Tribune. Lee, of the University of Georgia, notes that allegations that smokers and smoking "costs" society are misleading and devoid of public policy implications. "The cure is tolerance. Let's hope that Sullivan and his paternalistic allies take the cure. But if they refuse, let's not let public policy be guided by their intolerance," he writes. A copy is enclosed.

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- o The West Coast Black Publishers Association endorsed a resolution in support of the tobacco industry to sell their products within the Black community. A copy of the Association's letter to Senator Kennedy on this matter is enclosed.
- o California's controversial counter-advertising campaign was sharply criticized by Dan Jaffe, executive vice president of the Association of National Advertisers, in a speech to ANA's advertising and financial management conference in San Diego. Jaffe characterized the spots as domestic government propaganda that is inconsistent with the First Amendment.
- o Labor Management Committee representatives made indoor air quality and tax presentations to several key labor organizations in Michigan. These included the Michigan Education Association and the education department of the Michigan AFL-CIO. Meetings also were held with state leaders of the Service Employees International Union and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.
- o The New England Journal of Medicine published a letter to the editor from Alan Katzenstein on carbon monoxide and coronary artery disease. A copy is enclosed.
- o Frank Powell of the National Energy Management Institute (NEMI) conducted instructor training sessions in Sacramento. While in Sacramento, Powell also conducted a television and two radio interviews on sick buildings.

FEDERAL HEARINGS AND ACTIVITY

- o The draft conclusions of an ETS risk assessment being conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) were leaked to the Los Angeles Times. The article, carried on the Times wire service, prompted other media to run the story. Copies of a sampling of the media coverage are enclosed.

After the initial leak, the EPA's document remained unavailable to the media as well as to the industry. EPA officially refuses further comments on the draft documents.

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Institute staff conducted interviews with media outlets from ABC-TV, several satellite television organizations who feed to stations around the country, and others including the Associated Press and the New York Times.

Other immediate actions undertaken included:

- 1) Incorporating the issues raised by the EPA risk assessment into op-eds by the scientific witness team on the ETS symposium at McGill University. These editorials were distributed to major newspapers across the country.
- 2) Staff directly responded to those media outlets that covered the story in an unbalanced fashion. Responses will include personal contacts as well as written briefing materials.
- 3) We have asked the editorial boards of the nation's 25 largest newspapers to hear from a TI representative and a scientific expert on these issues.

Staff also plans to distribute to all science and health reporters just prior to the public release of the draft a set of materials on the industry's positions on ETS and risk assessment.

- o In a related story, anti-smoking activist Stanton Glantz released a paper on ETS exposure and cardiovascular disease. Glantz, the author of a chapter for EPA's ETS compendium, alleges that 32,000 nonsmoker deaths are attributable to cardiovascular disease from ETS exposure. Copies of The Institute's response and media clips are enclosed.

Academic scientists also replied, writing letters to the New York Times and Newsweek.

- o The Senate Finance Committee held a hearing to discuss the "health impact, costs of smoking." Testimony focused on the tobacco companies' advertising to youth, measures to prevent youth smoking, "costs" that smokers allegedly impose on health care systems and society, and measures that the federal government could use to discourage smoking.

Health and Human Services Secretary Louis W. Sullivan took center stage, using the hearing as a forum to release the HHS Office of Inspector General's report on access to cigarettes by minors. Sullivan also offered a 'model' bill for states to restrict sale of tobacco products to minors, i.e., a ban on vending machines and licensure of retailers who sell tobacco products.

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Media coverage was extensive and included all three television networks, CNN, Fox, Post-Newsweek stations, AP, UPI, Reuters, the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post and network radio (ABC, CBS, etc.). The Institute's spokespeople were at the hearing, and conducted interviews. Additionally, The Institute had a guest editorial in USA Today and appeared opposing Secretary Sullivan on CBS' Morning News.

Copies of The Institute's materials from the hearing and media coverage are enclosed.

- o The Interagency on Smoking and Health National Advisory Committee held a meeting to address the issue of preventing the sale of tobacco to minors. The Tobacco Institute submitted statements (copies enclosed) for itself and for Jolly Ann Davidson presenting the industry record of initiatives designed to restrict the sale of tobacco products to youth.

Chaired by Surgeon General Antonia C. Novella, the meeting heard from a range of anti-smoking activists. The Committee also heard from representatives from the Maine, Connecticut, Vermont and New Hampshire retail grocers associations. They stressed current efforts they have undertaken to enforce minimum age laws and indicated strong opposition to model legislation by Secretary Sullivan which suggests granting licenses to sell tobacco. Copies of the retailers' statement and press release are enclosed.

- o The House Subcommittee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Competitiveness held a hearing on "fire-safe" cigarette legislation. Media coverage of the hearing was light, and staff was on hand at the hearing to distribute The Institute's press materials and testimony. Copies of the materials are enclosed.

SPEECHES, BRIEFINGS AND OTHER ACTIVITY

- o Staff testified before the New York City Council regarding the proposal to ban cigarette sampling and vending machines.
- o A brochure on the new public smoking law in Virginia was distributed to the over 4,000 members of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce. The brochure outlines requirements of the new law, and is a joint effort from TI and the Chamber.
- o The Institute was a sponsor of and guest speaker for a dinner for the International Society of Restaurant Association Executives in Chicago.

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- Institute media relations staff participated in 65 broadcast interviews, conducted 155 print interviews and filled 549 information requests (188 from the media) during May.
- In May, Institute staff responded to 219 requests for assistance on workplace smoking issues. During the first quarter of 1990, TI received well over 1,000 requests for information concerning smoking in the workplace.
- Also enclosed is a sampling of other media coverage that may be of interest.

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