

file ETS

Topic: ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE - Politicians/Epidemiology
Title: "The S. 79 debate revisited"
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§ This is the transcript of a statement made by North
§ Carolina Senator Jesse Helms about environmental
§ tobacco smoke (ETS) during a US Senate debate on S.79,
§ the High Risk Occupational Disease Notification and
§ Prevention Act. Helms spoke in the context of Utah
§ Senator Orrin Hatch's assessment and interpretation of
§ epidemiological studies on ETS and the need to include
§ it in the legislation.

§ After explaining the differences between primary and
§ "passive" smoke exposure, Helms goes on to discuss the
§ chemical composition of ETS and reports of the US
§ Surgeon General (1986)¹, the International Agency for
§ Research on Cancer (1986)², and the Office of
§ Technology Assessment (1986)³, and the National
§ Academy of Sciences (1986)⁴.

§ He concludes by saying that "smoking, and now exposure
§ to ETS, has become an emotional issue. It must be
§ that because that is the only logical explanation for
§ concluding the (sic) ETS has been even remotely linked
§ with diseases such as lung cancer. An objective
§ reading of the available studies and materials
§ requires a different finding. Of course, the science
§ does not prove that exposure to ETS does not cause
§ chronic health diseases, but, as we all know, or
§ should know, it is impossible to prove a negative."

§ Helms advises Senators and individuals alike to take
§ the time to read these reports "with objective minds
§ before declaring anything to be a fact when it has not
§ been shown to be a fact".

¹ See INFOTOPICS January 1987 p. 2
² See INFOTOPICS July 1986 p 33
³ See INFOTOPICS June 1986 p. 13
⁴ See INFOTOPICS November 1986 p. 11