



Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development

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**“Super” Greenhouse Gases Responsible for Major Part of
Future US Climate Emissions;
US Projects More than Doubling by 2020**

HFCs Outpace 1.5% Growth for CO₂ and 4% for all Greenhouse Gases

Washington, DC, June 1, 2010 – Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), known as “super” greenhouse gases, are projected to more than double in the US by 2020, according to the Fifth U.S. Climate Action Report filed with the UN climate treaty body today. HFCs are man-made gases used primarily in air conditioning, refrigeration, and foam blowing.

The radical growth in HFCs compares with a projected growth of 1.5 percent in US emissions of CO₂, the principle greenhouse gas responsible for 50% or more of warming. The combined growth of all greenhouse gases in the US is projected at 4 percent.

“This dangerous growth rate requires an immediate phase out of HFCs,” said Durwood Zaelke, President of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development.

Fortunately, the world already has a successful regulatory framework to take on this problem: the Montreal Protocol ozone treaty. The tiny island of Micronesia is calling upon the treaty to phase out HFCs as the most important fast-action strategy for saving their island. The US, Mexico, and Canada also submitted a formal proposal to tackle HFCs under the Montreal Protocol. The first negotiating session is scheduled for Geneva, 14-18 June.

“We have climate friendly alternatives that can eliminate one of the six greenhouse gases if the US acts aggressively,” Zaelke added. “This would buy the world an insurance policy equal to a delay of a decade worth of CO₂ emissions.”

The total global mitigation from eliminating HFCs would be between 125 and 209 billion tonnes of CO₂-equivalent by 2050. This is nearly 10% of the total mitigation needed to avoid passing the 2°C temperature increase many countries consider to be the maximum tolerable rise above pre-Industrial levels (see [graph](#)).

If not aggressively phased out, HFCs could become up to one-third or more of total global warming.

“Targeting HFCs under the Montreal Protocol is a win-win-win game – benefits that are big, fast, and low-cost,” added Zaelke. “This is the road we have take to get the climate benefits we need to avoid the tipping points for abrupt climate change.”

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US Climate Action Report: <http://www.state.gov/g/oes/rls/rpts/car5/index.htm>

For more information on HFCs and the Montreal Protocol, see:

- <http://igsd.org/montreal/index.php>
- <http://www.youtube.com/user/igsdinece#p/a/u/1/kUnb27tuzcY>
- Reducing abrupt climate change risk using the Montreal Protocol and other regulatory actions to complement cuts in CO2 emissions, by Mario Molina, Durwood Zaelke, K. Madhava Sarma, Stephen O. Andersen, Veerabhadran Ramanathan, and Donald Kaniaru. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2009.
<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2009/10/09/0902568106.full.pdf+html>
- Micronesia proposal: http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/30oewg/OEWG-30-4E.pdf
- North American proposal:
http://ozone.unep.org/Meeting_Documents/oewg/30oewg/OEWG-30-5E.pdf