

# The United States legislative proceedings that have taken place to Regulate Output of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Into the Global Atmosphere

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## Air Pollution Control Act (1955)

### Summary:

- Promote Public Health and Welfare
- Providing technical and financial assistance to state and local governments
- Assisting in the development and operation of air-pollution control
- Enactments of this act was in response to serious [health-threatening crises](#)

### The Process:

- The Inter department Ad Hoc Committee on Community Air Pollution was formed by Eisenhower after urging by Senators Kuchel of California and Senator Capehart of Indiana
- The original draft of the bill was to remedy air pollution issues and gain appropriations of \$5 million per year for the next 5 years to work towards a solution and to find other alternatives for energy and chemicals to reduce pollution
- The senate favorably agreed to this bill and it was enacted on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1955

### Results:

- General Public became aware that Air Pollution was indeed a problem that needed attention
- Amended over the next 10 years to extend appropriations and continue to remedy the environmental issues

## The Clean Air Act (1963)

### Summary:

- Was to protect citizens from air pollution generated by vehicles, power plants, and other industrial facilities
- The restrictions placed upon the automobile industry was very controversial because they argued they didn't have the funds to meet the new standards put in place
- There was a large fear this act could harm the economy because of regulations placed on big business
- Financial grants to states and cities were made

### The Process:

- Leasers of big business and industry were very opposed because of the large cost they would need to take
- Opposition was led by the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Farm Bureau, the Manufacturing Chemists Association, the National Coal Association, and the American Paper and Pulp Association
- Wanted to set forth the Aircraft Emission Standards

### Results:

- Continued to allocate funds for regulation of greenhouse gases the next 30 years
- Addressed problems such as acid rain, ozone depletion, and toxic air pollution
- One of the most [comprehensive](#) air quality laws in the world

## Montreal Protocol (1987)

### Summary:

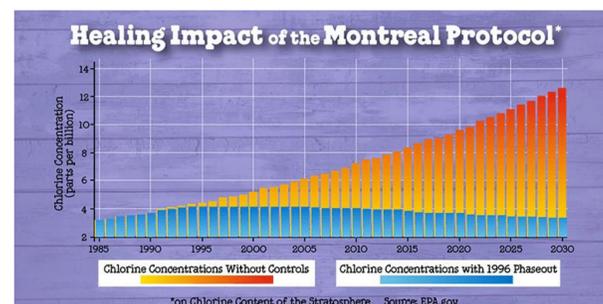
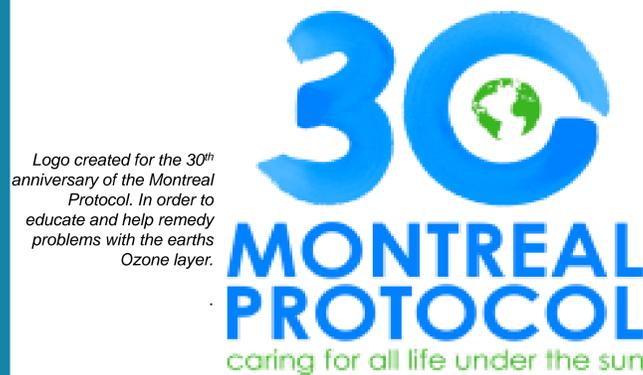
- International treaty that was designed to protect the earth's ozone layer by requiring the phasing out of Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other halogenated compounds that were suspected of causing the destruction of the ozone layer
- Prior to this the US had already banned CFCs in aerosols and were the example to the other countries involved
- Large scale support all over the world was possible because of the idea of the [Global Commons](#)

### The Process:

- Established a mandatory timetable for all countries to follow in the phaseout of ozone-depleting substances
- Delegates took into account that CFCs are crucial in air conditioning and other home appliances and that an immediate phaseout would've been impossible
- The Multilateral fund was created in order to aid developing countries in reducing CFC consumption with financial aid

### Results:

- It led to a 97% reduction in the production and import of ozone depleting substances throughout the world
- As of 2009, 146 of the 194 parties to the Montreal Protocol had met the CFC phaseout goal
- 141 country programs were set up and funded to help establish and operate costs of ozone conscious offices in developing countries



## United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)

### Summary:

- An annual climate convention to enforce protocols such as the Kyoto Protocol
- Objective is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system
- Sets non-binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual countries and has no enforcement mechanisms
- Contains 197 parties
- First task was to establish national greenhouse gas inventories of greenhouse gas emissions and removals

### The Process:

- Upon ratification, it committed governments to reduce atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases
- Parties should act to protect the climate system on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities, with strong developed countries taking the lead

### Results:

- Decisions made: Bail Action Plan, Copenhagen Accord, Cancun agreements, Kyoto Protocol, and Paris Agreement
- Adopted the term [Climate Empowerment](#)
- Six Priority Areas when fighting pollution: education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation on these issues



Logo representing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Created by the official institution.



At the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. "Sustainable Development" as a common goal. Talks of environment and air pollution were forefront topics.

## Agencies

### Environmental Protection Agency (1970):

- Their mission is to establish and regularly revise national ambient air quality standards for six common pollutants: particulate matter, ground-level ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides, and lead
- Established under the Clean Air Act of 1963 as an amendment

### Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (1988):

- A scientific and intergovernmental body under the auspices of the UN
- Formed because the EPA and US state department wanted an international convention to agree on restriction on greenhouse gases
- US was the main force in forming the IPCC as an autonomous body in where [scientist are the official governmental representative to make education based decisions](#)
- Receives funding by the UN Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization
- They create assessment reports reviewing climate science in order for legislation to take an appropriate response

## Important Terms:

**Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs):** Fully halogenated paraffin hydrocarbons that contain only carbon, chlorine, and fluorine and produce a volatile derivative that contributes to the ozone depletion in the upper atmosphere.

**Greenhouse Gases:** The combustion of fossil fuels that have led to an increase in global average surface temperatures and intensify climate conditions.

## Failures

**Kyoto Protocol (1997):** Even though President Clinton originally signed the treaty, congress failed to ratify this protocol due to fear of harm to the US economy as a result.

**Paris Agreement (2016):** President Donald Trump withdrew stating that this agreement will undermine the US and place the US at a permanent disadvantage in the global spectrum, yet the US cannot formally exit until 2020.