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EPA to Ban HFCs in Cars, Grocery Stores for Fast Climate Mitigation

Washington, DC, July 11 – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced yesterday a proposal to ban the use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) where climate-friendly alternatives are available, starting with mobile air conditioners, food refrigeration systems, foam blowers, and aerosol propellants, as industry leaders have successfully developed and implemented alternatives in these sectors. The EPA’s bans will cut the equivalent of 42 million metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂). The first bans would start in 2016. The HFC ban in mobile air conditioning would start in 2020, for new 2021 model cars.

HFCs are potent greenhouse gases with global warming potentials hundreds to thousands of times higher than CO₂, and are the fastest growing climate pollutants worldwide. HFCs have caused less than 1% of global warming to-date, but estimates project that without fast action they will cause as much as 0.5°C of additional warming by the end of the century. HFC emissions have risen rapidly as they replace the hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) being phased out under the Montreal Protocol.

This is the second major step in the EPA’s continued effort to reduce HFCs, referred to as “super greenhouse gases”, under President Obama's [Climate Action Plan](#). It follows a complementary proposal two weeks ago to approve new climate-friendly alternatives under EPA’s Significant New Alternatives Policy (SNAP) Program. The US is pursuing aggressive action to phase down HFCs internationally as well, including proposing a global phasedown of HFCs under the Montreal Protocol. Fast reductions in HFCs globally by 2020 could provide the equivalent of up to 200 billion tonnes of CO₂ in mitigation by 2050.

“The more the US does to reduce HFCs at home, the more credibility it has when it asks the rest of the world to follow its lead,” said Durwood Zaelke, President of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development. “The EPA bans will knock out a major part of the HFC problem in the US, and demonstrate to other countries that superior alternatives are already available.”

For more information:

EPA’s Fact Sheet on the proposed rule is [here](#).

EPA’s Press Release is [here](#).

IGSD’s *Primer on HFCs* is [here](#).