



Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development

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U.S. Won't Submit Fast-Action Climate Amendment Under Ozone Treaty May Consider Supporting Island Countries' Proposal

Washington, D.C., May 4, 2009 – Today marked the deadline for submitting proposed amendments to the Montreal Protocol for regulation of powerful HFC greenhouse gases under the treaty that could cut climate emissions equal to one third of the total global greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. The U.S. Administration ran out of time to submit its own amendment.

However, the matter is far from closed: a letter sent today from the U.S. State Department to the Montreal Protocol Secretariat noted that the use of HFCs is growing “dramatically,” that HFCs pose “a very significant further threat to the climate system because of their high global warming potentials,” and that the U.S. “has been extremely interested in how best to address the projected future growth of HFCs.” The U.S. hosted two “widely-attended” meetings this year with U.S. stakeholders from both the private sector and environmental organizations.

The letter also suggested that the U.S. would keep its options open for supporting the HFC proposal submitted last week by two island nations, the Federated States of Micronesia and Mauritius, and that the Montreal Protocol did indeed show significant potential for climate mitigation according to a recent study by EPA: “We note that recent analysis by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of various proposals shows that significant climate benefits could be achieved through a phase down of HFCs, assuming both developed and developing country commitments.”

“Using the Montreal Protocol to solve one third of the climate problem is a slam dunk,” said Durwood Zaelke, President of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development. “This is the treaty that never fails.”

Because HFCs are currently controlled under the climate convention, the Montreal Protocol Parties have invited UNFCCC representatives to attend a workshop on HFCs this July to discuss steps forward on the issue. The final decision on the island nations’ proposal will take place at the Meeting of the Parties in November 2009.

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