

Supporting solutions



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For more than 40 years, the American economy and the global economy have prospered while environmental protections have expanded. The US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) work has saved lives and prevented illnesses, and contributed directly to innovation, job creation and economic growth. Today, as our nations face severe economic, social and environmental challenges, we need to continue to innovate to tackle threats like climate change while ensuring that our economies thrive and our communities prosper.

With overwhelming amounts of scientific study showing that the threat is real, climate change is now a household issue. Parents across the United States and around the world are concerned for their children and grandchildren. Governments are investing significant resources in adaptation strategies, while businesses invest billions in efforts to reduce carbon emissions and make their operations sustainable. Military planners are considering climate change as a threat multiplier in areas of conflict and instability. They know that if we do not act to reduce greenhouse gases, the planet we leave to the next generation will be a very different place than the one we know today.

Fortunately, we have learned that we can address our global environmental challenges and still grow



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and prosper in ways that expand economic opportunity around the world. There is no silver bullet; sweeping government action doesn’t happen overnight, nor is it the only answer to the challenges we face as a global community. EPA is committed to working with communities to take tangible, common sense steps to address climate change. We know that everyone needs to be part of the solution. By taking a portfolio approach, in collaboration with partners in the US and around the world, we can make major strides forward even in the face of mounting obstacles.

We are focused on promoting win-win solutions that expand opportunities for green job development, increase efficiency and reduce costs. This work is nothing new; we have been promoting energy efficient technologies through our Energy Star program for nearly 20 years. Some of our recent efforts, including partnering with UNEP and a number of automobile companies through the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles and the expanded Renewable Fuels Standard, are geared specifically at targeting government resources to spur investment in energy efficiency.

We’re also working to address urgent threats that we know have an immediate and negative impact on our climate — like black carbon. By collaborating with scientists from around the world, EPA is working to identify the greatest sources of black carbon in our atmosphere and developing solutions to reduce emissions and limit harmful impacts to our environment, economy and security.

Our efforts are also focused on supporting innovative new solutions like green infrastructure. Not only does investment in natural and green infrastructure lead to improved air quality, water quality and reduced energy demands; it can also result in cost savings and increased property values. The City of Philadelphia has invested in simple, solar powered trash compactors that have reduced the need for constant waste pick-up. That has had the dual benefit of easing traffic for city residents while reducing greenhouse gas emissions from idling vehicles. The City of Chicago has invested in permeable paving that allows rainwater to soak into the ground — reducing the “urban heat island” effect and taking pressure off of their water infrastructure. These are the kinds of cross-cutting solutions that can help solve our climate challenges while improving our lives.

In a world where major environmental changes can disrupt commerce, displace indigenous communities, and impact energy security, these efforts reflect important social and economic priorities. Environmental protections can address even the most complex challenges, like climate change, while enhancing our prosperity. A global green economy will thrive on collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to common sense steps. By expanding interaction between governments, international institutions, business leaders and civil society, we can continue our history of increasing environmental and health protections while expanding prosperity around the globe.