



# Our Nation's Air

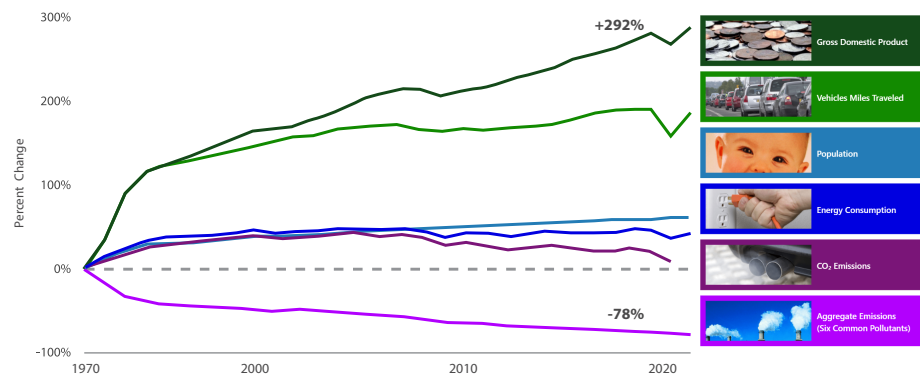
## Air Quality Improves as America Grows

<https://gispub.epa.gov/air/trendsreport/2022>

### Economic Strength with Cleaner Air

Between 1970 and 2021, the combined emissions of the six common pollutants (PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, VOCs, CO and Pb) dropped by 77 percent. This progress occurred while the U.S. economy continued to grow, Americans drove more miles and population and energy use increased.

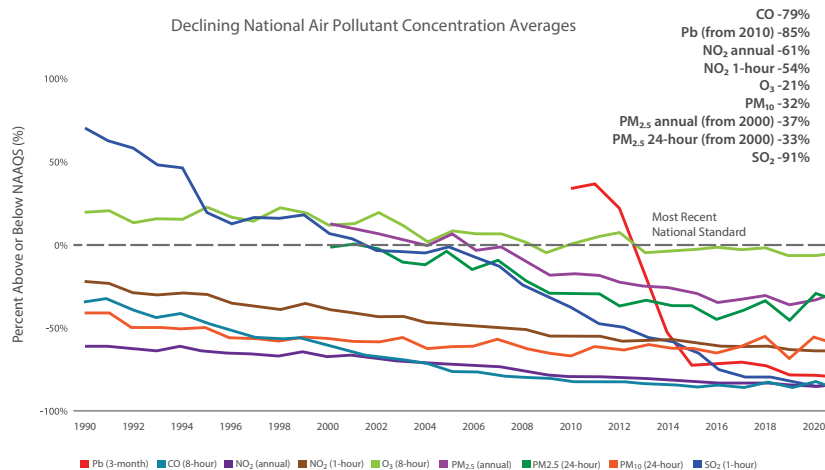
Comparison of Growth Areas and Declining Emissions  
1970-2021



### Air Quality Trends Show Clean Air Progress

While some pollutants continue to pose serious air quality problems in areas of the U.S., nationally, criteria air pollutant concentrations have dropped significantly since 1990 improving quality of life for many Americans. Air quality improves as America grows.

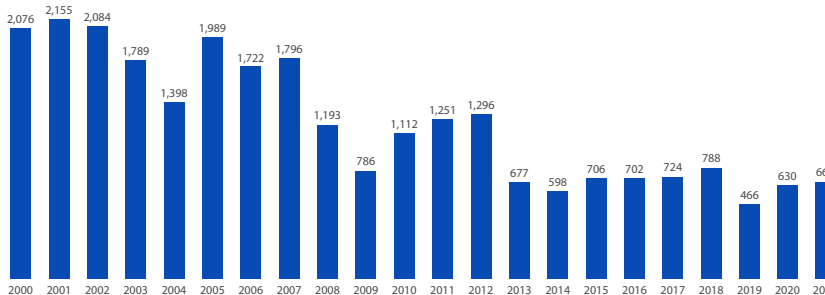
Declining National Air Pollutant Concentration Averages



### Unhealthy Air Days Show Long-Term Improvement

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a color-coded index EPA uses to communicate daily air pollution for ozone, particle pollution, NO<sub>2</sub>, CO, and SO<sub>2</sub>. A value in the unhealthy range, above national air quality standard for any pollutant, is of concern first for sensitive groups, then for everyone as the AQI value increases. Fewer unhealthy air quality days means better health, longevity, and quality of life for all of us.

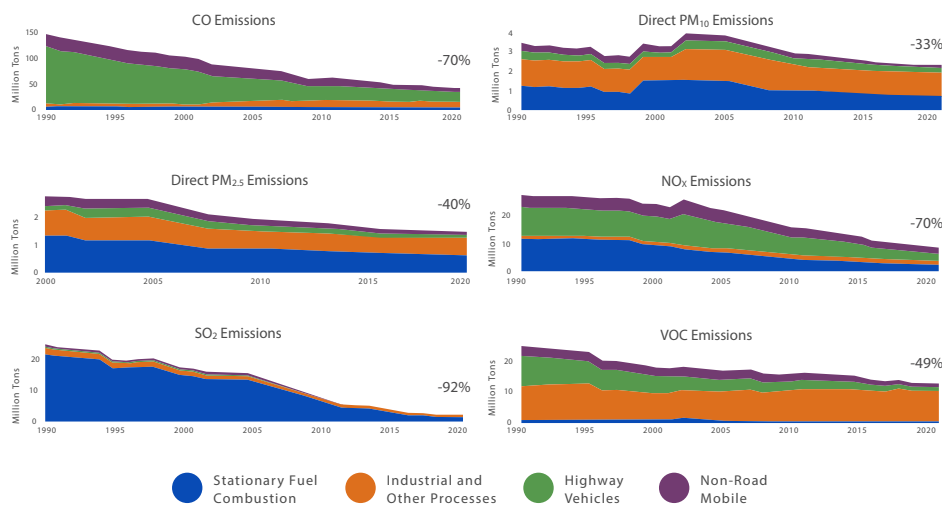
Number of Days Reaching "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" Level or Above on the Air Quality Index  
(Among 35 Major U.S. Cities for Ozone and PM<sub>2.5</sub> Combined)



Unhealthy air quality days vary year to year, influenced not only by pollution emissions but also by natural events, such as dust storms and wildfires, and variations in weather.

### Air Pollutant Emissions Decreasing

Emissions of key air pollutants continue to decline from 1990 levels. These reductions are driven by federal and state implementation of stationary and mobile source regulations.



## Status and Trends Through 2021