

1. Introduction

This report presents estimates by the United States government of U.S. anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and sinks for the years 1990 through 2014. A summary of these estimates is provided in Table 2-1 and Table 2-2 by gas and source category in the Trends in Greenhouse Gas Emissions chapter. The emission estimates in these tables are presented on both a full molecular mass basis and on a Global Warming Potential (GWP) weighted basis¹ in order to show the relative contribution of each gas to global average radiative forcing. This report also discusses the methods and data used to calculate these emission estimates.

In 1992, the United States signed and ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). As stated in Article 2 of the UNFCCC, “The ultimate objective of this Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.”^{2,3}

Parties to the Convention, by ratifying, “shall develop, periodically update, publish and make available... national inventories of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of all greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, using comparable methodologies...”⁴ The United States views this report as an opportunity to fulfill these commitments under the UNFCCC.

In 1988, preceding the creation of the UNFCCC, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) jointly established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The role of the IPCC is to assess on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis the scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of risk of human-induced climate change, its potential impacts and options for adaptation and mitigation (IPCC 2003). Under Working Group 1 of the IPCC, nearly 140 scientists and national experts from more than thirty countries collaborated in the creation of the *Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* (IPCC/UNEP/OECD/IEA 1997) to ensure that the emission inventories submitted to the UNFCCC are consistent and comparable between nations. The *IPCC Good Practice Guidance and Uncertainty Management in National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* and the *IPCC Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry* further expanded upon the methodologies in the *Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines*. In 2006, the IPCC accepted the *2006 Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* at its Twenty-Fifth Session (Mauritius, April 2006). The *2006 IPCC Guidelines* built

¹ More information provided in “Global Warming Potentials” section of this chapter on the use of *IPCC Fourth Assessment Report* (AR4) GWP values.

² The term “anthropogenic,” in this context, refers to greenhouse gas emissions and removals that are a direct result of human activities or are the result of natural processes that have been affected by human activities (IPCC 2006).

³ Article 2 of the Framework Convention on Climate Change published by the UNEP/WMO Information Unit on Climate Change. See <<http://unfccc.int>>. (UNEP/WMO 2000)

⁴ Article 4(1)(a) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (also identified in Article 12). Subsequent decisions by the Conference of the Parties elaborated the role of Annex I Parties in preparing national inventories. See <<http://unfccc.int>>.

upon the previous bodies of work and include new sources and gases “...as well as updates to the previously published methods whenever scientific and technical knowledge have improved since the previous guidelines were issued. The UNFCCC adopted the *2006 IPCC Guidelines* as the standard methodological approach for Annex I countries at the Nineteenth Conference of the Parties (Warsaw, November 11-23, 2013). This report presents information in accordance with these guidelines.

Overall, this Inventory of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and sinks provides a common and consistent mechanism through which Parties to the UNFCCC can estimate emissions and compare the relative contribution of individual sources, gases, and nations to climate change. The Inventory provides a national estimate of sources and sinks for the United States, including all states and U.S. Territories.⁵ The structure of this report is consistent with the current UNFCCC Guidelines on Annual Inventories (UNFCCC 2014).

Box 1-1: Methodological Approach for Estimating and Reporting U.S. Emissions and Sinks

In following the UNFCCC requirement under Article 4.1 to develop and submit national greenhouse gas emissions inventories, the gross emissions total presented in this report for the United States excludes emissions and sinks from LULUCF. The net emissions total presented in this report for the United States includes emissions and sinks from LULUCF. All emissions and sinks are calculated using internationally-accepted methods provided by the IPCC.⁶ Additionally, the calculated emissions and sinks in a given year for the United States are presented in a common manner in line with the UNFCCC reporting guidelines for the reporting of inventories under this international agreement.⁷ The use of consistent methods to calculate emissions and sinks by all nations providing their inventories to the UNFCCC ensures that these reports are comparable. In this regard, U.S. emissions and sinks reported in this Inventory report are comparable to emissions and sinks reported by other countries. The manner that emissions and sinks are provided in this Inventory is one of many ways U.S. emissions and sinks could be examined; this Inventory report presents emissions and sinks in a common format consistent with how countries are to report inventories under the UNFCCC. Emissions and sinks provided in this Inventory do not preclude alternative examinations, but rather this inventory report presents emissions and sinks in a common format consistent with how countries are to report inventories under the UNFCCC. The report itself follows this standardized format, and provides an explanation of the IPCC methods used to calculate emissions and sinks, and the manner in which those calculations are conducted.

On October 30, 2009, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a rule for the mandatory reporting of greenhouse gases from large greenhouse gas emissions sources in the United States. Implementation of 40 CFR Part 98 is referred to as the EPA’s GHGRP. 40 CFR Part 98 applies to direct greenhouse gas emitters, fossil fuel suppliers, industrial gas suppliers, and facilities that inject CO₂ underground for sequestration or other reasons.⁸ Reporting is at the facility level, except for certain suppliers of fossil fuels and industrial greenhouse gases. The GHGRP dataset and the data presented in this Inventory report are complementary and, as indicated in the respective planned improvements sections in this report’s chapters, EPA is analyzing the data for use, as applicable, to improve the national estimates presented in this Inventory.

⁵ U.S. Territories include American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Wake Island, and other U.S. Pacific Islands.

⁶ See <<http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/index.html>>.

⁷ See <<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a03.pdf#page=2>>.

⁸ See <<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ghgrulemaking.html>> and <<http://ghgdata.epa.gov/ghgp/main.do>>.

1.1 Background Information

Science

For over the past 200 years, the burning of fossil fuels such as coal and oil, deforestation, land-use changes, and other sources have caused the concentrations of heat-trapping "greenhouse gases" to increase significantly in our atmosphere (NOAA 2014). These gases in the atmosphere absorb some of the energy being radiated from the surface of the Earth and then re-radiate this energy with some returning to the Earth's surface, essentially acting like a blanket that makes the Earth's surface warmer than it would be otherwise.

Greenhouse gases are necessary to life as we know it. Without greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the planet's surface would be about 60 degrees Fahrenheit cooler than present (EPA 2009). Carbon dioxide is also necessary for plant growth. With emissions from biological and geological sources, there is a natural level of greenhouse gases that is maintained in the atmosphere. But, as the concentrations of these gases continue to increase in from man-made sources, the Earth's temperature is climbing above past levels. The Earth's averaged land and ocean surface temperature has increased by about 1.2 to 1.9 degrees Fahrenheit since 1880. The last three decades have each been the warmest decade successively at the Earth's surface since 1850 (IPCC 2013). Most of the warming in recent decades is very likely the result of human activities. Other aspects of the climate are also changing such as rainfall patterns, snow and ice cover, and sea level.

If greenhouse gases continue to increase, climate models predict that the average temperature at the Earth's surface is likely to increase from 0.5 to 8.6 degrees Fahrenheit above 1986 through 2005 levels by the end of this century, depending on future emissions (IPCC 2013). Scientists are certain that human activities are changing the composition of the atmosphere, and that increasing the concentration of greenhouse gases will change the planet's climate. However, they are not sure by how much it will change, at what rate it will change, or what the exact effects will be.⁹

Greenhouse Gases

Although the Earth's atmosphere consists mainly of oxygen and nitrogen, neither plays a significant role in enhancing the greenhouse effect because both are essentially transparent to terrestrial radiation. The greenhouse effect is primarily a function of the concentration of water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and other trace gases in the atmosphere that absorb the terrestrial radiation leaving the surface of the Earth (IPCC 2013). Changes in the atmospheric concentrations of these greenhouse gases can alter the balance of energy transfers between the space and the earth system.¹⁰ A gauge of these changes is called radiative forcing, which is a measure of the influence a perturbation has in altering the balance of incoming and outgoing energy in the Earth-atmosphere system (IPCC 2013). Holding everything else constant, increases in greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere will produce positive radiative forcing (i.e., a net increase in the absorption of energy by the Earth).

Human activities are continuing to affect the Earth's energy budget by changing the emissions and resulting atmospheric concentrations of radiatively important gases and aerosols and by changing land surface properties (IPCC 2013).

Naturally occurring greenhouse gases include water vapor, CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, and ozone (O₃). Several classes of halogenated substances that contain fluorine, chlorine, or bromine are also greenhouse gases, but they are, for the most part, solely a product of industrial activities. Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) are halocarbons that contain chlorine, while halocarbons that contain bromine are referred to as bromofluorocarbons (i.e., halons). As stratospheric ozone depleting substances, CFCs, HCFCs, and halons are

⁹ For more information see <<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/science>>.

¹⁰ For more on the science of climate change, see NRC (2012).

covered under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The UNFCCC defers to this earlier international treaty. Consequently, Parties to the UNFCCC are not required to include these gases in national greenhouse gas inventories.¹¹ Some other fluorine-containing halogenated substances—hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆), and nitrogen trifluoride (NF₃)—do not deplete stratospheric ozone but are potent greenhouse gases. These latter substances are addressed by the UNFCCC and accounted for in national greenhouse gas inventories.

There are also several other substances that influence the global radiation budget but are short-lived and therefore not well-mixed. These substances include carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and tropospheric (ground level) O₃. Tropospheric ozone is formed by two precursor pollutants, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) in the presence of ultraviolet light (sunlight).

Aerosols are extremely small particles or liquid droplets suspended in the Earth’s atmosphere that are often composed of sulfur compounds, carbonaceous combustion products (e.g., black carbon), crustal materials (e.g., dust) and other human induced pollutants. They can affect the absorptive characteristics of the atmosphere (e.g., scattering incoming sunlight away from the Earth’s surface, or, in the case of black carbon, absorb sunlight) and can play a role in affecting cloud formation and lifetime affecting the radiative forcing of clouds and precipitation patterns. Comparatively, however, while the understanding of aerosols has increased in recent years, they still account for the largest contribution to uncertainty estimates in global energy budgets (IPCC 2013).

Carbon dioxide, CH₄, and N₂O are continuously emitted to and removed from the atmosphere by natural processes on Earth. Anthropogenic activities, however, can cause additional quantities of these and other greenhouse gases to be emitted or sequestered, thereby changing their global average atmospheric concentrations. Natural activities such as respiration by plants or animals and seasonal cycles of plant growth and decay are examples of processes that only cycle carbon or nitrogen between the atmosphere and organic biomass. Such processes, except when directly or indirectly perturbed out of equilibrium by anthropogenic activities, generally do not alter average atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations over decadal timeframes. Climatic changes resulting from anthropogenic activities, however, could have positive or negative feedback effects on these natural systems. Atmospheric concentrations of these gases, along with their rates of growth and atmospheric lifetimes, are presented in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1: Global Atmospheric Concentration, Rate of Concentration Change, and Atmospheric Lifetime of Selected Greenhouse Gases

Atmospheric Variable	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	SF ₆	CF ₄
Pre-industrial atmospheric concentration	280 ppm	0.700 ppm	0.270 ppm	0 ppt	40 ppt
Atmospheric concentration	401 ppm ^a	1.823 ppm ^b	0.327 ppm ^b	8.3 ppt ^b	79 ppt ^c
Rate of concentration change	2.3 ppm/yr	5 ppb/yr ^{d,e}	0.8 ppb/yr ^e	0.27 ppt/yr ^e	0.7 ppt/yr ^e
Atmospheric lifetime (years)	See footnote ^f	12.4 ^g	121 ^g	3,200	50,000

^a The atmospheric CO₂ concentration is the 2015 annual average at the Mauna Loa, HI station (NOAA/ESRL 2016).

^b The values presented are global 2014 annual average mole fractions (CDIAC 2015).

^c The 2011 CF₄ global mean atmospheric concentration is from the Advanced Global Atmospheric Gases Experiment (IPCC 2013).

^d The growth rate for atmospheric CH₄ decreased from over 10 ppb/yr in the 1980s to nearly zero in the early 2000s; recently, the growth rate has been about 5 ppb/year.

^e The rate of concentration change is the average rate of change between 2005 and 2011 (IPCC 2013).

^f For a given amount of carbon dioxide emitted, some fraction of the atmospheric increase in concentration is quickly absorbed by the oceans and terrestrial vegetation, some fraction of the atmospheric increase will only slowly decrease over a number of years, and a small portion of the increase will remain for many centuries or more.

^g This lifetime has been defined as an “adjustment time” that takes into account the indirect effect of the gas on its own residence time.

Source: Pre-industrial atmospheric concentrations, atmospheric lifetime, and rate of concentration changes for CH₄, N₂O, SF₆, and CF₄ are from IPCC (2013). The rate of concentration change for CO₂ is an average of the rates from 2011 through 2015 has fluctuated between 1.7 to 3.0 ppm per year over this period (NOAA/ESRL 2016).

¹¹ Emissions estimates of CFCs, HCFCs, halons and other ozone-depleting substances are included in this document for informational purposes.

A brief description of each greenhouse gas, its sources, and its role in the atmosphere is given below. The following section then explains the concept of GWPs, which are assigned to individual gases as a measure of their relative average global radiative forcing effect.

Water Vapor (H₂O). Water vapor is the largest contributor to the natural greenhouse effect. Water vapor is fundamentally different from other greenhouse gases in that it can condense and rain out when it reaches high concentrations, and the total amount of water vapor in the atmosphere is in part a function of the Earth's temperature. While some human activities such as evaporation from irrigated crops or power plant cooling release water vapor into the air, this has been determined to have a negligible effect on climate (IPCC 2013). The lifetime of water vapor in the troposphere is on the order of 10 days. Water vapor can also contribute to cloud formation, and clouds can have both warming and cooling effects by either trapping or reflecting heat. Because of the relationship between water vapor levels and temperature, water vapor and clouds serve as a feedback to climate change, such that for any given increase in other greenhouse gases, the total warming is greater than would happen in the absence of water vapor. Aircraft contrails, which consist of water vapor and other substances, are aviation-induced clouds with the same radiative forcing effects as high-altitude cirrus clouds (IPCC 1999).

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂). In nature, carbon is cycled between various atmospheric, oceanic, land biotic, marine biotic, and mineral reservoirs. The largest fluxes occur between the atmosphere and terrestrial biota, and between the atmosphere and surface water of the oceans. In the atmosphere, carbon predominantly exists in its oxidized form as CO₂. Atmospheric CO₂ is part of this global carbon cycle, and therefore its fate is a complex function of geochemical and biological processes. Carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere increased from approximately 280 parts per million by volume (ppmv) in pre-industrial times to 401 ppmv in 2015, a 43 percent increase (IPCC 2013 and NOAA/ESRL 2016).^{12,13} The IPCC definitively states that “the increase of CO₂ ... is caused by anthropogenic emissions from the use of fossil fuel as a source of energy and from land use and land use changes, in particular agriculture” (IPCC 2013). The predominant source of anthropogenic CO₂ emissions is the combustion of fossil fuels. Forest clearing, other biomass burning, and some non-energy production processes (e.g., cement production) also emit notable quantities of CO₂. In its *Fifth Assessment Report*, the IPCC stated “it is extremely likely that more than half of the observed increase in global average surface temperature from 1951 to 2010 was caused by the anthropogenic increase in greenhouse gas concentrations and other anthropogenic forcings together,” of which CO₂ is the most important (IPCC 2013).

Methane (CH₄). Methane is primarily produced through anaerobic decomposition of organic matter in biological systems. Agricultural processes such as wetland rice cultivation, enteric fermentation in animals, and the decomposition of animal wastes emit CH₄, as does the decomposition of municipal solid wastes. Methane is also emitted during the production and distribution of natural gas and petroleum, and is released as a by-product of coal mining and incomplete fossil fuel combustion. Atmospheric concentrations of CH₄ have increased by about 160 percent since 1750, from a pre-industrial value of about 700 ppb to 1,823 ppb in 2014,¹⁴ although the rate of increase decreased to near zero in the early 2000s, and has recently increased again to about 5 ppb/year. The IPCC has estimated that slightly more than half of the current CH₄ flux to the atmosphere is anthropogenic, from human activities such as agriculture, fossil fuel use, and waste disposal (IPCC 2007).

Methane is primarily removed from the atmosphere through a reaction with the hydroxyl radical (OH) and is ultimately converted to CO₂. Minor removal processes also include reaction with chlorine in the marine boundary layer, a soil sink, and stratospheric reactions. Increasing emissions of CH₄ reduce the concentration of OH, a feedback that increases the atmospheric lifetime of CH₄ (IPCC 2013). Methane's reactions in the atmosphere also lead to production of tropospheric ozone and stratospheric water vapor, both of which also contribute to climate change.

Nitrous Oxide (N₂O). Anthropogenic sources of N₂O emissions include agricultural soils, especially production of nitrogen-fixing crops and forages, the use of synthetic and manure fertilizers, and manure deposition by livestock; fossil fuel combustion, especially from mobile combustion; adipic (nylon) and nitric acid production; wastewater

¹² The pre-industrial period is considered as the time preceding the year 1750 (IPCC 2013).

¹³ Carbon dioxide concentrations during the last 1,000 years of the pre-industrial period (i.e., 750 to 1750), a time of relative climate stability, fluctuated by about ±10 ppmv around 280 ppmv (IPCC 2013).

¹⁴ This value is the global 2014 annual average mole fraction (CDIAC 2015).

treatment and waste incineration; and biomass burning. The atmospheric concentration of N₂O has increased by 21 percent since 1750, from a pre-industrial value of about 270 ppb to 327 ppb in 2014,¹⁵ a concentration that has not been exceeded during the last thousand years. Nitrous oxide is primarily removed from the atmosphere by the photolytic action of sunlight in the stratosphere (IPCC 2007).

Ozone (O₃). Ozone is present in both the upper stratosphere,¹⁶ where it shields the Earth from harmful levels of ultraviolet radiation, and at lower concentrations in the troposphere,¹⁷ where it is the main component of anthropogenic photochemical “smog.” During the last two decades, emissions of anthropogenic chlorine and bromine-containing halocarbons, such as CFCs, have depleted stratospheric ozone concentrations. This loss of ozone in the stratosphere has resulted in negative radiative forcing, representing an indirect effect of anthropogenic emissions of chlorine and bromine compounds (IPCC 2013). The depletion of stratospheric ozone and its radiative forcing was expected to reach a maximum in about 2000 before starting to recover.

The past increase in tropospheric ozone, which is also a greenhouse gas, is estimated to provide the fourth largest increase in direct radiative forcing since the pre-industrial era, behind CO₂, black carbon, and CH₄. Tropospheric ozone is produced from complex chemical reactions of volatile organic compounds (including CH₄) mixing with NO_x in the presence of sunlight. The tropospheric concentrations of ozone and these other pollutants are short-lived and, therefore, spatially variable (IPCC 2013).

Halocarbons, Perfluorocarbons, Sulfur Hexafluoride, and Nitrogen Trifluoride. Halocarbons are, for the most part, man-made chemicals that have both direct and indirect radiative forcing effects. Halocarbons that contain chlorine (CFCs, HCFCs, methyl chloroform, and carbon tetrachloride) and bromine (halons, methyl bromide, and hydrobromofluorocarbons) result in stratospheric ozone depletion and are therefore controlled under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Although CFCs and HCFCs include potent global warming gases, their net radiative forcing effect on the atmosphere is reduced because they cause stratospheric ozone depletion, which itself is an important greenhouse gas in addition to shielding the Earth from harmful levels of ultraviolet radiation. Under the Montreal Protocol, the United States phased out the production and importation of halons by 1994 and of CFCs by 1996. Under the Copenhagen Amendments to the Protocol, a cap was placed on the production and importation of HCFCs by non-Article 5¹⁸ countries beginning in 1996, and then followed by a complete phase-out by the year 2030. While ozone depleting gases covered under the Montreal Protocol and its Amendments are not covered by the UNFCCC, they are reported in this inventory under Annex 6.2 of this report for informational purposes.

Hydrofluorocarbons, PFCs, SF₆, and NF₃ are not ozone depleting substances, and therefore are not covered under the Montreal Protocol. They are, however, powerful greenhouse gases. Hydrofluorocarbons are primarily used as replacements for ozone depleting substances but also emitted as a by-product of the HCFC-22 manufacturing process. Currently, they have a small aggregate radiative forcing impact, but it is anticipated that their contribution to overall radiative forcing will increase (IPCC 2013). Perfluorocarbons, SF₆, and NF₃ are predominantly emitted from various industrial processes including aluminum smelting, semiconductor manufacturing, electric power transmission and distribution, and magnesium casting. Currently, the radiative forcing impact of PFCs, SF₆, and NF₃ is also small, but they have a significant growth rate, extremely long atmospheric lifetimes, and are strong absorbers of infrared radiation, and therefore have the potential to influence climate far into the future (IPCC 2013).

¹⁵ This value is the global 2014 annual average (CDIAC 2015).

¹⁶ The stratosphere is the layer from the troposphere up to roughly 50 kilometers. In the lower regions the temperature is nearly constant but in the upper layer the temperature increases rapidly because of sunlight absorption by the ozone layer. The ozone-layer is the part of the stratosphere from 19 kilometers up to 48 kilometers where the concentration of ozone reaches up to 10 parts per million.

¹⁷ The troposphere is the layer from the ground up to 11 kilometers near the poles and up to 16 kilometers in equatorial regions (i.e., the lowest layer of the atmosphere where people live). It contains roughly 80 percent of the mass of all gases in the atmosphere and is the site for most weather processes, including most of the water vapor and clouds.

¹⁸ Article 5 of the Montreal Protocol covers several groups of countries, especially developing countries, with low consumption rates of ozone depleting substances. Developing countries with per capita consumption of less than 0.3 kg of certain ozone depleting substances (weighted by their ozone depleting potential) receive financial assistance and a grace period of ten additional years in the phase-out of ozone depleting substances.

Carbon Monoxide. Carbon monoxide has an indirect radiative forcing effect by elevating concentrations of CH₄ and tropospheric ozone through chemical reactions with other atmospheric constituents (e.g., the hydroxyl radical, OH) that would otherwise assist in destroying CH₄ and tropospheric ozone. Carbon monoxide is created when carbon-containing fuels are burned incompletely. Through natural processes in the atmosphere, it is eventually oxidized to CO₂. Carbon monoxide concentrations are both short-lived in the atmosphere and spatially variable.

Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x). The primary climate change effects of nitrogen oxides (i.e., NO and NO₂) are indirect and result from their role in promoting the formation of ozone in the troposphere, are a precursor to nitrate particles (i.e., aerosols) and, to a lesser degree, lower stratosphere, where they have positive radiative forcing effects.¹⁹ Additionally, NO_x emissions are also likely to decrease CH₄ concentrations, thus having a negative radiative forcing effect (IPCC 2013). Nitrogen oxides are created from lightning, soil microbial activity, biomass burning (both natural and anthropogenic fires) fuel combustion, and, in the stratosphere, from the photo-degradation of N₂O. Concentrations of NO_x are both relatively short-lived in the atmosphere and spatially variable.

Non-methane Volatile Organic Compounds (NMVOCs). Non-methane volatile organic compounds include substances such as propane, butane, and ethane. These compounds participate, along with NO_x, in the formation of tropospheric ozone and other photochemical oxidants. NMVOCs are emitted primarily from transportation and industrial processes, as well as biomass burning and non-industrial consumption of organic solvents. Concentrations of NMVOCs tend to be both short-lived in the atmosphere and spatially variable.

Aerosols. Aerosols are extremely small particles or liquid droplets found in the atmosphere that are either directly emitted into or are created through chemical reactions in the Earth's atmosphere. Aerosols or their chemical precursors can be emitted by natural events such as dust storms and volcanic activity, or by anthropogenic processes such as fuel combustion and biomass burning. Various categories of aerosols exist, including naturally produced aerosols such as soil dust, sea salt, biogenic aerosols, sulfates, nitrates, and volcanic aerosols, and anthropogenically manufactured aerosols such as industrial dust and carbonaceous²⁰ aerosols (e.g., black carbon, organic carbon) from transportation, coal combustion, cement manufacturing, waste incineration, and biomass burning. Aerosols can be removed from the atmosphere relatively rapidly by precipitation or through more complex processes under dry conditions.

Aerosols affect radiative forcing differently than greenhouse gases. Their radiative effects occur through direct and indirect mechanisms: directly by scattering and absorbing solar radiation (and to a lesser extent scattering, absorption, and emission of terrestrial radiation); and indirectly by increasing cloud droplets and ice crystals that modify the formation, precipitation efficiency, and radiative properties of clouds (IPCC 2013). Despite advances in understanding of cloud-aerosol interactions, the contribution of aerosols to radiative forcing are difficult to quantify because aerosols generally have short atmospheric lifetimes, and have number concentrations, size distributions, and compositions that vary regionally, spatially, and temporally (IPCC 2013).

The net effect of aerosols on the Earth's radiative forcing is believed to be negative (i.e., net cooling effect on the climate). In fact, "despite the large uncertainty ranges on aerosol forcing, there is high confidence that aerosols have offset a substantial portion of GHG forcing" (IPCC 2013).²¹ Although because they remain in the atmosphere for only days to weeks, their concentrations respond rapidly to changes in emissions.²² Not all aerosols have a cooling effect. Current research suggests that another constituent of aerosols, black carbon, has a positive radiative forcing by heating the Earth's atmosphere and causing surface warming when deposited on ice and snow (IPCC 2013). Black carbon also influences cloud development, but the direction and magnitude of this forcing is an area of active research.

¹⁹ NO_x emissions injected higher in the stratosphere, primarily from fuel combustion emissions from high altitude supersonic aircraft, can lead to stratospheric ozone depletion.

²⁰ Carbonaceous aerosols are aerosols that are comprised mainly of organic substances and forms of black carbon (or soot) (IPCC 2013).

²¹ The IPCC (2013) defines high confidence as an indication of strong scientific evidence and agreement in this statement.

²² Volcanic activity can inject significant quantities of aerosol producing sulfur dioxide and other sulfur compounds into the stratosphere, which can result in a longer negative forcing effect (i.e., a few years) (IPCC 2013).

Global Warming Potentials

A global warming potential is a quantified measure of the globally averaged relative radiative forcing impacts of a particular greenhouse gas (see Table 1-2). It is defined as the ratio of the time-integrated radiative forcing from the instantaneous release of 1 kilogram (kg) of a trace substance relative to that of 1 kg of a reference gas (IPCC 2007). Direct radiative effects occur when the gas itself absorbs radiation. Indirect radiative forcing occurs when chemical transformations involving the original gas produce a gas or gases that are greenhouse gases, or when a gas influences other radiatively important processes such as the atmospheric lifetimes of other gases. The reference gas used is CO₂, and therefore GWP-weighted emissions are measured in million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent (MMT CO₂ Eq.).²³ The relationship between kilotons (kt) of a gas and MMT CO₂ Eq. can be expressed as follows:

$$MMT\ CO_2\ Eq. = (kt\ of\ gas) \times (GWP) \times \left(\frac{MMT}{1,000\ kt} \right)$$

where,

MMT CO₂ Eq. = Million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent

kt = Kilotons (equivalent to a thousand metric tons)

GWP = Global warming potential

MMT = Million metric tons

GWP values allow for a comparison of the impacts of emissions and reductions of different gases. According to the IPCC, GWPs typically have an uncertainty of ±35 percent. Parties to the UNFCCC have also agreed to use GWPs based upon a 100-year time horizon, although other time horizon values are available.

...the global warming potential values used by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties) to calculate the carbon dioxide equivalence of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases shall be those listed in the column entitled “Global warming potential for given time horizon” in table 2.14 of the errata to the contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, based on the effects of greenhouse gases over a 100-year time horizon...²⁴

Greenhouse gases with relatively long atmospheric lifetimes (e.g., CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, HFCs, PFCs, SF₆, NF₃) tend to be evenly distributed throughout the atmosphere, and consequently global average concentrations can be determined. The short-lived gases such as water vapor, carbon monoxide, tropospheric ozone, ozone precursors (e.g., NO_x, and NMVOCs), and tropospheric aerosols (e.g., SO₂ products and carbonaceous particles), however, vary regionally, and consequently it is difficult to quantify their global radiative forcing impacts. Parties to the UNFCCC have not agreed upon GWP values for these gases that are short-lived and spatially inhomogeneous in the atmosphere.

Table 1-2: Global Warming Potentials and Atmospheric Lifetimes (Years) Used in this Report

Gas	Atmospheric Lifetime	GWP ^c
CO ₂	^b	1
CH ₄ ^a	12	25
N ₂ O	114	298
HFC-23	270	14,800
HFC-32	4.9	675

²³ Carbon comprises 12/44^{ths} of carbon dioxide by weight.

²⁴ Framework Convention on Climate Change; Available online at: <<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a03.pdf>>; 31 January 2014; Report of the Conference of the Parties at its nineteenth session; held in Warsaw from 11 to 23 November 2013; Addendum; Part two: Action taken by the Conference of the Parties at its nineteenth session; Decision 24/CP.19; Revision of the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on annual inventories for Parties included in Annex I to the Convention; p. 2. (UNFCCC 2014).

HFC-125	29	3,500
HFC-134a	14	1,430
HFC-143a	52	4,470
HFC-152a	1.4	124
HFC-227ea	34.2	3,220
HFC-236fa	240	9,810
HFC-4310mee	15.9	1,640
CF ₄	50,000	7,390
C ₂ F ₆	10,000	12,200
C ₄ F ₁₀	2,600	8,860
C ₆ F ₁₄	3,200	9,300
SF ₆	3,200	22,800
NF ₃	740	17,200

^a The GWP of CH₄ includes the direct effects and those indirect effects due to the production of tropospheric ozone and stratospheric water vapor. The indirect effect due to the production of CO₂ is not included.

^b For a given amount of carbon dioxide emitted, some fraction of the atmospheric increase in concentration is quickly absorbed by the oceans and terrestrial vegetation, some fraction of the atmospheric increase will only slowly decrease over a number of years, and a small portion of the increase will remain for many centuries or more.

^c 100-year time horizon.

Source: (IPCC 2007)

Box 1-2: The IPCC Fifth Assessment Report and Global Warming Potentials

In 2014, the IPCC published its *Fifth Assessment Report* (AR5), which provided an updated and more comprehensive scientific assessment of climate change. Within the AR5 report, the GWP values of several gases were revised relative to previous IPCC reports, namely the *IPCC Second Assessment Report* (SAR) (IPCC 1996), the *IPCC Third Assessment Report* (TAR) (IPCC 2001), and the *IPCC Fourth Assessment Report* (AR4) (IPCC 2007). Although the AR4 GWP values are used throughout this report, consistent with UNFCCC reporting requirements, it is interesting to review the changes to the GWP values and the impact improved understanding has on the total GWP-weighted emissions of the United States. In the AR5, the IPCC has applied an improved calculation of CO₂ radiative forcing and an improved CO₂ response function in presenting updated GWP values. Additionally, the atmospheric lifetimes of some gases have been recalculated, and updated background concentrations were used. In addition, the values for radiative forcing and lifetimes have been recalculated for a variety of halocarbons, and the indirect effects of methane on ozone have been adjusted to match more recent science. Table 1-3 presents the new GWP values, relative to those presented in the AR4 and using the 100-year time horizon common to UNFCCC reporting.

Table 1-3: Comparison of 100-Year GWP values

Gas	SAR	AR4	AR5 ^a	AR5 with feedbacks ^b	Comparison to AR4		
					SAR	AR5	AR5 with feedbacks ^b
CO ₂	1	1	1	1	NC	NC	NC
CH ₄ ^c	21	25	28	34	(4)	3	9
N ₂ O	310	298	265	298	12	(33)	0
HFC-23	11,700	14,800	12,400	13,856	(3,100)	(2,400)	(944)
HFC-32	650	675	677	817	(25)	2	142
HFC-125	2,800	3,500	3,170	3,691	(700)	(330)	191
HFC-134a	1,300	1,430	1,300	1,549	(130)	(130)	119
HFC-143a	3,800	4,470	4,800	5,508	(670)	330	1,038
HFC-152a	140	124	138	167	16	14	43

HFC-227ea	2,900	3,220	3,350	3,860	(320)	130	640
HFC-236fa	6,300	9,810	8,060	8,998	(3,510)	(1,750)	(812)
HFC-4310mee	1,300	1,640	1,650	1,952	(340)	10	312
CF ₄	6,500	7,390	6,630	7,349	(890)	(760)	(41)
C ₂ F ₆	9,200	12,200	11,100	12,340	(3,000)	(1,100)	140
C ₄ F ₁₀	7,000	8,860	9,200	10,213	(1,860)	340	1,353
C ₆ F ₁₄	7,400	9,300	7,910	8,780	(1,900)	(1,390)	(520)
SF ₆	23,900	22,800	23,500	26,087	1,100	700	3,287
NF ₃	NA	17,200	16,100	17,885	NA	(1,100)	685

NC – No Change

NA – Not Applicable

^a The GWPs presented here are the ones most consistent with the methodology used in the AR4 report.

^b The GWP values presented here from the AR5 report include climate-carbon feedbacks for the non-CO₂ gases in order to be consistent with the approach used in calculating the CO₂ lifetime.

Additionally, the AR5 reported separate values for fossil versus biogenic methane in order to account for the CO₂ oxidation product.

^c The GWP of CH₄ includes the direct effects and those indirect effects due to the production of tropospheric ozone and stratospheric water vapor. The indirect effect due to the production of CO₂ is only included in the value from AR5 that includes climate-carbon feedbacks.

Note: Parentheses indicate negative values.

Source: (IPCC 2013, IPCC 2007, IPCC 2001, IPCC 1996).

To comply with international reporting standards under the UNFCCC, official emission estimates are reported by the United States using AR4 GWP values, as required by the 2013 revision to the UNFCCC reporting guidelines for national inventories.²⁵ All estimates provided throughout this report are also presented in unweighted units. For informational purposes, emission estimates that use GWPs from other IPCC Assessment Reports are presented in detail in Annex 6.1 of this report.

1.2 National Inventory Arrangements

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in cooperation with other U.S. government agencies, prepares the Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks. A wide range of agencies and individuals are involved in supplying data to, planning methodological approaches and improvements, reviewing, or preparing portions of the U.S. Inventory—including federal and state government authorities, research and academic institutions, industry associations, and private consultants.

Within EPA, the Office of Atmospheric Programs (OAP) is the lead office responsible for the emission calculations provided in the Inventory, as well as the completion of the National Inventory Report and the Common Reporting Format tables. EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality (OTAQ) is also involved in calculating emissions for the Inventory. While the U.S. Department of State officially submits the annual Inventory to the UNFCCC, EPA's OAP serves as the Inventory focal point for technical questions and comments on the U.S. Inventory. The staff of OAP and OTAQ coordinates the annual methodological choice, activity data collection, and emission calculations at the individual source category level. Within OAP, an inventory coordinator compiles the entire Inventory into the proper reporting format for submission to the UNFCCC, and is responsible for the collection and consistency of cross-cutting issues in the Inventory.

Several other government agencies contribute to the collection and analysis of the underlying activity data used in the Inventory calculations. Formal relationships exist between EPA and other U.S. agencies that provide official data for use in the Inventory. The U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration provides

²⁵ See <<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a03.pdf>>.

national fuel consumption data and the U.S. Department of Defense provides military fuel consumption and bunker fuels. Informal relationships also exist with other U.S. agencies to provide activity data for use in EPA's emission calculations. These include: the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Federal Highway Administration, the Department of Transportation, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the Department of Commerce, the National Agricultural Statistics Service, and the Federal Aviation Administration. Academic and research centers also provide activity data and calculations to EPA, as well as individual companies participating in voluntary outreach efforts with EPA. Finally, the U.S. Department of State officially submits the Inventory to the UNFCCC each April. Figure 1-1 diagrams the National Inventory Arrangements.

Figure 1-1: National Inventory Arrangements Diagram



1.3 Inventory Process

EPA has a decentralized approach to preparing the annual U.S. Inventory, which consists of a National Inventory Report (NIR) and Common Reporting Format (CRF) tables. The inventory coordinator at EPA is responsible for compiling all emission estimates and ensuring consistency and quality throughout the NIR and CRF tables. Emission calculations for individual sources are the responsibility of individual source leads, who are most familiar with each source category and the unique characteristics of its emissions profile. The individual source leads determine the most appropriate methodology and collect the best activity data to use in the emission calculations, based upon their expertise in the source category, as well as coordinating with researchers and contractors familiar with the sources. A multi-stage process for collecting information from the individual source leads and producing the Inventory is undertaken annually to compile all information and data.

Methodology Development, Data Collection, and Emissions and Sink Estimation

Source leads at EPA collect input data and, as necessary, evaluate or develop the estimation methodology for the individual source categories. For most source categories, the methodology for the previous year is applied to the new “current” year of the Inventory, and inventory analysts collect any new data or update data that have changed from the previous year. If estimates for a new source category are being developed for the first time, or if the methodology is changing for an existing source category (e.g., the United States is implementing a higher Tiered approach for that source category), then the source category lead will develop a new methodology, gather the most appropriate activity data and emission factors (or in some cases direct emission measurements) for the entire time series, and conduct a special source-specific peer review process involving relevant experts from industry, government, and universities.

Once the methodology is in place and the data are collected, the individual source leads calculate emissions and sink estimates. The source leads then update or create the relevant text and accompanying annexes for the Inventory. Source leads are also responsible for completing the relevant sectoral background tables of the Common Reporting Format, conducting quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) checks, and uncertainty analyses.

Summary Spreadsheet Compilation and Data Storage

The inventory coordinator at EPA collects the source categories’ descriptive text and Annexes, and also aggregates the emission estimates into a summary spreadsheet that links the individual source category spreadsheets together. This summary sheet contains all of the essential data in one central location, in formats commonly used in the Inventory document. In addition to the data from each source category, national trend and related data are also gathered in the summary sheet for use in the Executive Summary, Introduction, and Recent Trends sections of the Inventory report. Electronic copies of each year’s summary spreadsheet, which contains all the emission and sink estimates for the United States, are kept on a central server at EPA under the jurisdiction of the inventory coordinator.

National Inventory Report Preparation

The NIR is compiled from the sections developed by each individual source lead. In addition, the inventory coordinator prepares a brief overview of each chapter that summarizes the emissions from all sources discussed in the chapters. The inventory coordinator then carries out a key category analysis for the Inventory, consistent with the *2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*, and in accordance with the reporting requirements of the UNFCCC. Also at this time, the Introduction, Executive Summary, and Recent Trends sections are drafted, to reflect the trends for the most recent year of the current Inventory. The analysis of trends necessitates gathering supplemental data, including weather and temperature conditions, economic activity and gross domestic product, population, atmospheric conditions, and the annual consumption of electricity, energy, and fossil fuels.

Changes in these data are used to explain the trends observed in greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. Furthermore, specific factors that affect individual sectors are researched and discussed. Many of the factors that affect emissions are included in the Inventory document as separate analyses or side discussions in boxes within the text. Text boxes are also created to examine the data aggregated in different ways than in the remainder of the document, such as a focus on transportation activities or emissions from electricity generation. The document is prepared to match the specification of the UNFCCC reporting guidelines for National Inventory Reports.

Common Reporting Format Table Compilation

The CRF tables are compiled from individual tables completed by each individual source lead, which contain source emissions and activity data. The inventory coordinator integrates the source data into the UNFCCC's "CRF Reporter" for the United States, assuring consistency across all sectoral tables. The summary reports for emissions, methods, and emission factors used, the overview tables for completeness and quality of estimates, the recalculation tables, the notation key completion tables, and the emission trends tables are then completed by the inventory coordinator. Internal automated quality checks on the CRF Reporter, as well as reviews by the source leads, are completed for the entire time series of CRF tables before submission.

QA/QC and Uncertainty

QA/QC and uncertainty analyses are supervised by the QA/QC and Uncertainty coordinators, who have general oversight over the implementation of the QA/QC plan and the overall uncertainty analysis for the Inventory (see sections on QA/QC and Uncertainty, below). These coordinators work closely with the source leads to ensure that a consistent QA/QC plan and uncertainty analysis is implemented across all inventory sources. The inventory QA/QC plan, detailed in a following section, is consistent with the quality assurance procedures outlined by EPA and IPCC.

Expert and Public Review Periods

During the Expert Review period, a first draft of the document is sent to a select list of technical experts outside of EPA. The purpose of the Expert Review is to encourage feedback on the methodological and data sources used in the current Inventory, especially for sources which have experienced any changes since the previous Inventory.

Once comments are received and addressed, a second draft of the document is released for public review by publishing a notice in the U.S. Federal Register and posting the document on the EPA Web site. The Public Review period allows for a 30 day comment period and is open to the entire U.S. public.

Final Submittal to UNFCCC and Document Printing

After the final revisions to incorporate any comments from the Expert Review and Public Review periods, EPA prepares the final National Inventory Report and the accompanying Common Reporting Format Reporter database. The U.S. Department of State sends the official submission of the U.S. Inventory to the UNFCCC. The document is then formatted and posted online, available for the public.¹

1.4 Methodology and Data Sources

Emissions of greenhouse gases from various source and sink categories have been estimated using methodologies that are consistent with the *2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* (IPCC 2006). To the extent possible, the present report relies on published activity and emission factor data. Depending on the emission

¹ See <<http://epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/usinventoryreport.html>>

source category, activity data can include fuel consumption or deliveries, vehicle-miles traveled, raw material processed, etc. Emission factors are factors that relate quantities of emissions to an activity.

The IPCC methodologies provided in the *2006 IPCC Guidelines* represent baseline methodologies for a variety of source categories, and many of these methodologies continue to be improved and refined as new research and data become available. This report uses the IPCC methodologies when applicable, and supplements them with other available country-specific methodologies and data where possible. Choices made regarding the methodologies and data sources used are provided in conjunction with the discussion of each source category in the main body of the report. Complete documentation is provided in the annexes on the detailed methodologies and data sources utilized in the calculation of each source category.

Box 1-3: IPCC Reference Approach

The UNFCCC reporting guidelines require countries to complete a "top-down" reference approach for estimating CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel combustion in addition to their "bottom-up" sectoral methodology. This estimation method uses alternative methodologies and different data sources than those contained in that section of the Energy chapter. The reference approach estimates fossil fuel consumption by adjusting national aggregate fuel production data for imports, exports, and stock changes rather than relying on end-user consumption surveys (see Annex 4 of this report). The reference approach assumes that once carbon-based fuels are brought into a national economy, they are either saved in some way (e.g., stored in products, kept in fuel stocks, or left unoxidized in ash) or combusted, and therefore the carbon in them is oxidized and released into the atmosphere. Accounting for actual consumption of fuels at the sectoral or sub-national level is not required.

1.5 Key Categories

The *2006 IPCC Guidelines* (IPCC 2006) defines a key category as a "[category] that is prioritized within the national inventory system because its estimate has a significant influence on a country's total inventory of greenhouse gases in terms of the absolute level, the trend, or the uncertainty in emissions and removals."² By definition, key categories include those categories that have the greatest contribution to the absolute level of national emissions. In addition, when an entire time series of emission and removal estimates is prepared, a thorough investigation of key categories must also account for the influence of trends and uncertainties of individual source and sink categories. This analysis culls out source and sink categories that diverge from the overall trend in national emissions. Finally, a qualitative evaluation of key categories is performed to capture any categories that were not identified in any of the quantitative analyses.

Approach 1, as defined in the *2006 IPCC Guidelines* (IPCC 2006), was implemented to identify the key categories for the United States. This analysis was performed twice; one analysis included sources and sinks from the Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (LULUCF) sector, the other analysis did not include the LULUCF categories. Following Approach 1, Approach 2, as defined in the *2006 IPCC Guidelines* (IPCC 2006), was then implemented to identify any additional key categories not already identified in Approach 1 assessment. This analysis, which includes each source category's uncertainty assessments (or proxies) in its calculations, was also performed twice to include or exclude LULUCF categories.

In addition to conducting Approach 1 and 2 level and trend assessments, a qualitative assessment of the source categories, as described in the *2006 IPCC Guidelines* (IPCC 2006), was conducted to capture any key categories that were not identified by either quantitative method. One additional key category, international bunker fuels, was identified using this qualitative assessment. International bunker fuels are fuels consumed for aviation or marine international transport activities, and emissions from these fuels are reported separately from totals in accordance

² See Chapter 4 "Methodological Choice and Identification of Key Categories" in IPCC (2006). See <<http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/2006gl/index.html>>.

with IPCC guidelines. If these emissions were included in the totals, bunker fuels would qualify as a key category according to Approach 1. The amount of uncertainty associated with estimation of emissions from international bunker fuels also supports the qualification of this source category as key, because it would qualify bunker fuels as a key category according to Approach 2. Table 1-4 presents the key categories for the United States (including and excluding LULUCF categories) using emissions and uncertainty data in this report, and ranked according to their sector and global warming potential (GWP)-weighted emissions in 2014. The table also indicates the criteria used in identifying these categories (i.e., level, trend, Approach 1, Approach 2, and/or qualitative assessments). Annex 1 of this report provides additional information regarding the key categories in the United States and the methodologies used to identify them.

Table 1-4: Key Categories for the United States (1990-2014)

IPCC Source Categories	Gas	Approach 1				Approach 2				Qual ^a	2014 Emissions (MMT CO ₂ Eq.)
		Level Without LULUCF	Trend Without LULUCF	Level With LULUCF	Trend With LULUCF	Level Without LULUCF	Trend Without LULUCF	Level With LULUCF	Trend With LULUCF		
Energy											
CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Coal - Electricity Generation	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		1,570.4
CO ₂ Emissions from Mobile Combustion: Road	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		1,467.5
CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Gas - Industrial	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		466.0
CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Gas - Electricity Generation	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		443.2
CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Gas - Residential	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		277.6
CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Oil - Industrial	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		271.9
CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Gas - Commercial	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		189.2
CO ₂ Emissions from Mobile Combustion: Aviation	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		150.1
CO ₂ Emissions from Non-Energy Use of Fuels	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		114.3
CO ₂ Emissions from Mobile Combustion: Other	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		92.0
CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Coal - Industrial	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		75.3
CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Oil - Residential	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		67.5
CO ₂ Emissions from Natural Gas Systems	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		42.4

CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Oil - Commercial	CO ₂	•	•	•	•					38.2
CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Oil - U.S. Territories	CO ₂	•		•	•					34.6
CO ₂ Emissions from Mobile Combustion: Marine	CO ₂	•	•	•	•					28.0
CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Oil - Electricity Generation	CO ₂	•	•	•	•		•		•	25.3
CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Coal - Commercial	CO ₂			•	•					4.5
CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Gas - U.S. Territories	CO ₂						•			3.0
CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Coal - Residential	CO ₂						•			0.0
CH ₄ Emissions from Natural Gas Systems	CH ₄	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	176.1
CH ₄ Emissions from Petroleum Systems	CH ₄	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	68.1
Fugitive Emissions from Coal Mining	CH ₄	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	67.6
Non-CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Residential	CH ₄					•		•		5.0
Non-CO ₂ Emissions from Stationary Combustion - Electricity Generation	N ₂ O			•	•	•	•	•	•	19.6
N ₂ O Emissions from Mobile Combustion: Road	N ₂ O	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	12.5
International Bunker Fuels ^b	Several								•	104.2

Industrial Processes and Product Use

CO ₂ Emissions from Iron and Steel Production & Metallurgical Coke Production	CO ₂	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	55.4
CO ₂ Emissions from Cement Production	CO ₂	•		•						38.8
CO ₂ Emissions from Other Process Uses of Carbonates	CO ₂			•	•					12.1
N ₂ O Emissions from Adipic Acid Production	N ₂ O			•	•					5.4
Emissions from Substitutes for Ozone Depleting Substances	HiGWP	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	161.2
SF ₆ Emissions from Electrical Transmission and Distribution	HiGWP			•	•		•		•	5.6
HFC-23 Emissions from HCFC-22 Production	HiGWP	•	•	•	•		•			5.0
PFC Emissions from Aluminum Production	HiGWP			•	•					2.5

Agriculture										
CH ₄ Emissions from Enteric Fermentation	CH ₄	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		164.3
CH ₄ Emissions from Manure Management	CH ₄	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		61.2
Direct N ₂ O Emissions from Agricultural Soil Management	N ₂ O	•		•		•		•		261.0
Indirect N ₂ O Emissions from Applied Nitrogen	N ₂ O	•		•		•	•	•	•	57.3
Waste										
CH ₄ Emissions from Landfills	CH ₄	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	148.0
Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry										
CO ₂ Emissions from Land Converted to Grassland	CO ₂			•						40.4
CO ₂ Emissions from Land Converted to Cropland	CO ₂			•	•			•	•	22.1
CO ₂ Emissions from Grassland Remaining Grassland	CO ₂							•	•	3.8
CO ₂ Emissions from Cropland Remaining Cropland	CO ₂			•	•			•	•	(8.4)
CO ₂ Emissions from Landfilled Yard Trimmings and Food Scraps	CO ₂							•	•	(11.6)
CO ₂ Emissions from Urban Trees	CO ₂			•	•			•	•	(90.6)
CO ₂ Emissions from Forest Land Remaining Forest Land	CO ₂			•	•			•	•	(742.3)
CH ₄ Emissions from Forest Fires	CH ₄							•	•	7.3
Subtotal Without LULUCF										6,687.8
Total Emissions Without LULUCF										6,870.5
Percent of Total Without LULUCF										97%
Subtotal With LULUCF										5,905.5
Total Emissions With LULUCF										6,108.0
Percent of Total With LULUCF										97%

^a Qualitative criteria.

^b Emissions from this source not included in totals.

Note: Parentheses indicate negative values (or sequestration).

1.6 Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC)

As part of efforts to achieve its stated goals for inventory quality, transparency, and credibility, the United States has developed a quality assurance and quality control plan designed to check, document and improve the quality of its

inventory over time. QA/QC activities on the Inventory are undertaken within the framework of the U.S. *Quality Assurance/Quality Control and Uncertainty Management Plan* (QA/QC plan) for the U.S. Greenhouse Gas Inventory: Procedures Manual for QA/QC and Uncertainty Analysis.

Key attributes of the QA/QC plan are summarized in Figure 1-2. These attributes include:

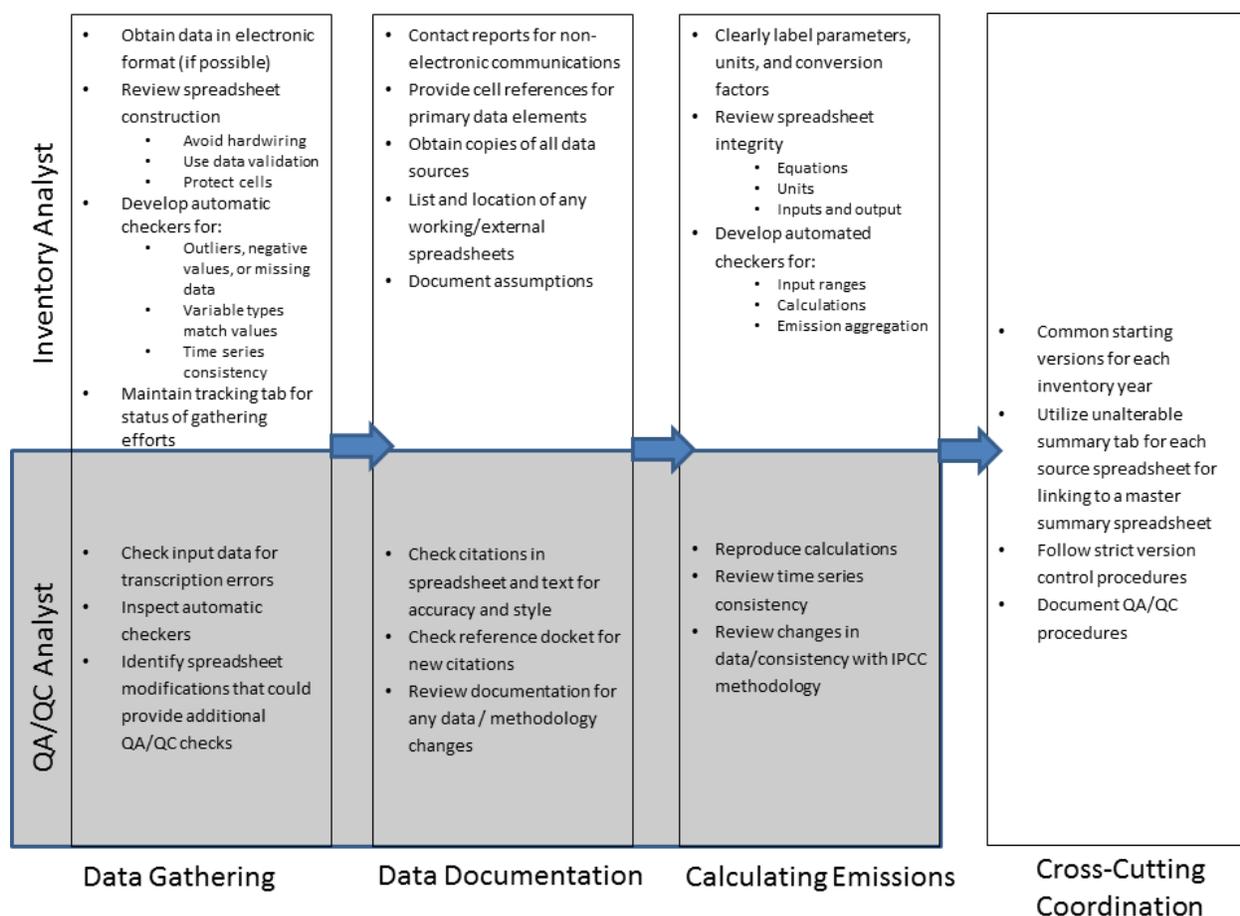
- *Procedures and Forms*: detailed and specific systems that serve to standardize the process of documenting and archiving information, as well as to guide the implementation of QA/QC and the analysis of uncertainty
- *Implementation of Procedures*: application of QA/QC procedures throughout the whole inventory development process from initial data collection, through preparation of the emission estimates, to publication of the Inventory
- *Quality Assurance*: expert and public reviews for both the inventory estimates and the inventory report (which is the primary vehicle for disseminating the results of the inventory development process)
- *Quality Control*: consideration of secondary data and source-specific checks (Tier 2 QC) in parallel and coordination with the uncertainty assessment; the development of protocols and templates, which provides for more structured communication and integration with the suppliers of secondary information
- *Tier 1 (general) and Tier 2 (source-specific) Checks*: quality controls and checks, as recommended by *IPCC Good Practice Guidance*
- *Record Keeping*: provisions to track which procedures have been followed, the results of the QA/QC, uncertainty analysis, and feedback mechanisms for corrective action based on the results of the investigations which provide for continual data quality improvement and guided research efforts
- *Multi-Year Implementation*: a schedule for coordinating the application of QA/QC procedures across multiple years
- *Interaction and Coordination*: promoting communication within the EPA, across Federal agencies and departments, state government programs, and research institutions and consulting firms involved in supplying data or preparing estimates for the Inventory. The QA/QC Management Plan itself is intended to be revised and reflect new information that becomes available as the program develops, methods are improved, or additional supporting documents become necessary.

In addition, based on the national QA/QC plan for the Inventory, source-specific QA/QC plans have been developed for a number of sources. These plans follow the procedures outlined in the national QA/QC plan, tailoring the procedures to the specific text and spreadsheets of the individual sources. For each greenhouse gas emissions source or sink included in this Inventory, a minimum of a Tier 1 QA/QC analysis has been undertaken. Where QA/QC activities for a particular source go beyond the minimum Tier 1 level, further explanation is provided within the respective source category text.

The quality control activities described in the U.S. QA/QC plan occur throughout the inventory process; QA/QC is not separate from, but is an integral part of, preparing the Inventory. Quality control—in the form of both good practices (such as documentation procedures) and checks on whether good practices and procedures are being followed—is applied at every stage of inventory development and document preparation. In addition, quality assurance occurs at two stages—an expert review and a public review. While both phases can significantly contribute to inventory quality, the public review phase is also essential for promoting the openness of the inventory development process and the transparency of the inventory data and methods.

The QA/QC plan guides the process of ensuring inventory quality by describing data and methodology checks, developing processes governing peer review and public comments, and developing guidance on conducting an analysis of the uncertainty surrounding the emission estimates. The QA/QC procedures also include feedback loops and provide for corrective actions that are designed to improve the inventory estimates over time.

Figure 1-2: U.S. QA/QC Plan Summary



1.7 Uncertainty Analysis of Emission Estimates

Uncertainty estimates are an essential element of a complete and transparent emissions inventory. Uncertainty information is not intended to dispute the validity of the inventory estimates, but to help prioritize efforts to improve the accuracy of future inventories and guide future decisions on methodological choice. While the U.S. Inventory calculates its emission estimates with the highest possible accuracy, uncertainties are associated to a varying degree with the development of emission estimates for any inventory. Some of the current estimates, such as those for carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from energy-related activities, are considered to have minimal uncertainty associated with them. For some other categories of emissions, however, a lack of data or an incomplete understanding of how emissions are generated increases the uncertainty surrounding the estimates presented. The UNFCCC reporting guidelines follow the recommendation in the *2006 IPCC Guidelines* (IPCC 2006) and require that countries provide single point estimates for each gas and emission or removal source category. Within the discussion of each emission source, specific factors affecting the uncertainty associated with the estimates are discussed.

Additional research in the following areas could help reduce uncertainty in the U.S. Inventory:

- Incorporating excluded emission sources.* Quantitative estimates for some of the sources and sinks of greenhouse gas emissions are not available at this time. In particular, emissions from some land-use activities and industrial processes are not included in the inventory either because data are incomplete or

because methodologies do not exist for estimating emissions from these source categories. See Annex 5 of this report for a discussion of the sources of greenhouse gas emissions and sinks excluded from this report.

- *Improving the accuracy of emission factors.* Further research is needed in some cases to improve the accuracy of emission factors used to calculate emissions from a variety of sources. For example, the accuracy of current emission factors applied to CH₄ and N₂O emissions from stationary and mobile combustion is highly uncertain.
- *Collecting detailed activity data.* Although methodologies exist for estimating emissions for some sources, problems arise in obtaining activity data at a level of detail in which aggregate emission factors can be applied. For example, the ability to estimate emissions of SF₆ from electrical transmission and distribution is limited due to a lack of activity data regarding national SF₆ consumption or average equipment leak rates.

The overall uncertainty estimate for total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions was developed using the IPCC Approach 2 uncertainty estimation methodology. Estimates of quantitative uncertainty for the total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions are shown below, in Table 1-5.

The IPCC provides good practice guidance on two approaches—Approach 1 and Approach 2—to estimating uncertainty for individual source categories. Approach 2 uncertainty analysis, employing the Monte Carlo Stochastic Simulation technique, was applied wherever data and resources permitted; further explanation is provided within the respective source category text and in Annex 7. Consistent with the *2006 IPCC Guidelines* (IPCC 2006), over a multi-year timeframe, the United States expects to continue to improve the uncertainty estimates presented in this report.

Table 1-5: Estimated Overall Inventory Quantitative Uncertainty (MMT CO₂ Eq. and Percent)

Gas	2014 Emission Estimate ^a (MMT CO ₂ Eq.)	Uncertainty Range Relative to Emission Estimate ^b				Mean ^c (MMT CO ₂ Eq.)	Standard Deviation ^c
		Lower Bound ^d		Upper Bound ^d			
		(MMT CO ₂ Eq.)	(%)	(MMT CO ₂ Eq.)	(%)		
CO ₂	5,555.6	5,459.4	5,830.0	-2%	5%	5,643.8	94.9
CH ₄ ^e	730.8	674.3	917.5	-8%	26%	785.0	60.2
N ₂ O ^e	403.5	322.5	447.9	-20%	11%	378.6	32.2
PFC, HFC, SF ₆ , and NF ₃ ^e	175.3	172.3	190.9	-4%	6%	181.6	4.7
Total	6,865.2	6,765.4	7,223.9	-2%	5%	6,989.0	117.5
LULUCF Emissions^f	24.6	12.8	38.9	-48%	58%	23.0	6.8
LULUCF Total Net Flux^g	(787.0)	(1,051.4)	(647.8)	-18%	34%	(847.2)	102.9
LULUCF Sector Total^h	(762.5)	(1,029.8)	(622.5)	-18%	35%	(824.2)	103.0
Net Emissions (Sources and Sinks)	6,102.7	5,861.6	6,477.6	-4%	6%	6,164.8	156.7

Notes: Total emissions (excluding emissions for which uncertainty was not quantified) is presented without LULUCF. Net emissions is presented with LULUCF.

^a Emission estimates reported in this table correspond to emissions from only those source categories for which quantitative uncertainty was performed this year. Thus the totals reported in this table exclude approximately 5.3 MMT CO₂ Eq. of emissions for which quantitative uncertainty was not assessed. Hence, these emission estimates do not match the final total U.S. greenhouse gas emission estimates presented in this Inventory.

^b The lower and upper bounds for emission estimates correspond to a 95 percent confidence interval, with the lower bound corresponding to 2.5th percentile and the upper bound corresponding to 97.5th percentile.

^c Mean value indicates the arithmetic average of the simulated emission estimates; standard deviation indicates the extent of deviation of the simulated values from the mean.

^d The lower and upper bound emission estimates for the sub-source categories do not sum to total emissions because the low and high estimates for total emissions were calculated separately through simulations.

^e The overall uncertainty estimates did not take into account the uncertainty in the GWP values for CH₄, N₂O and high GWP gases used in the inventory emission calculations for 2014.

^f LULUCF emissions include the CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O emissions reported for Non-CO₂ Emissions from Forest Fires, N₂O Fluxes from Forest Soils, CO₂ Emissions from Agricultural Liming, CO₂ Emissions from Urea Fertilization, Peatlands Remaining Peatlands, and N₂O Fluxes from Settlement Soils.

^g Net CO₂ flux is the net C stock change from the following categories: Forest Land Remaining Forest Land, Land Converted to Forest Land, Cropland Remaining Cropland, Land Converted to Cropland, Grassland Remaining Grassland, Land Converted to Grassland, Settlements Remaining Settlements, and Other.

^h The LULUCF Sector Total is the net sum of all emissions (i.e., sources) of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere plus removals of CO₂ (i.e., sinks or negative emissions) from the atmosphere.

Notes: Totals may not sum due to independent rounding. Parentheses indicate net sequestration.

Emissions calculated for the U.S. Inventory reflect current best estimates; in some cases, however, estimates are based on approximate methodologies, assumptions, and incomplete data. As new information becomes available in the future, the United States will continue to improve and revise its emission estimates. See Annex 7 of this report for further details on the U.S. process for estimating uncertainty associated with the emission estimates and for a more detailed discussion of the limitations of the current analysis and plans for improvement. Annex 7 also includes details on the uncertainty analysis performed for selected source categories.

1.8 Completeness

This report, along with its accompanying CRF tables, serves as a thorough assessment of the anthropogenic sources and sinks of greenhouse gas emissions for the United States for the time series 1990 through 2014. Although this report is intended to be comprehensive, certain sources have been identified which were excluded from the estimates presented for various reasons. Generally speaking, sources not accounted for in this Inventory are excluded due to data limitations or a lack of thorough understanding of the emission process. The United States is continually working to improve upon the understanding of such sources and seeking to find the data required to estimate related emissions. As such improvements are implemented, new emission sources are quantified and included in the Inventory. For a complete list of sources not included, see Annex 5 of this report.

1.9 Organization of Report

In accordance with the revision of the UNFCCC reporting guidelines agreed to at the nineteenth Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC 2014), this Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks is segregated into five sector-specific chapters, listed below in Table 1-6. In addition, chapters on Trends in Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Other information to be considered as part of the U.S. Inventory submission are included.

Table 1-6: IPCC Sector Descriptions

Chapter/IPCC Sector	Activities Included
Energy	Emissions of all greenhouse gases resulting from stationary and mobile energy activities including fuel combustion and fugitive fuel emissions, and non-energy use of fossil fuels.
Industrial Processes and Product Use	Emissions resulting from industrial processes and product use of greenhouse gases.
Agriculture	Anthropogenic emissions from agricultural activities except fuel combustion, which is addressed under Energy.
Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry	Emissions and removals of CO ₂ , CH ₄ , and N ₂ O from forest management, other land-use activities, and land-use change.
Waste	Emissions from waste management activities.

Within each chapter, emissions are identified by the anthropogenic activity that is the source or sink of the greenhouse gas emissions being estimated (e.g., coal mining). Overall, the following organizational structure is consistently applied throughout this report:

Chapter/IPCC Sector: Overview of emission trends for each IPCC defined sector

Source category: Description of source pathway and emission trends.

Methodology: Description of analytical methods employed to produce emission estimates and identification of data references, primarily for activity data and emission factors.

Uncertainty and Timeseries Consistency: A discussion and quantification of the uncertainty in emission estimates and a discussion of time-series consistency.

QA/QC and Verification: A discussion on steps taken to QA/QC and verify the emission estimates, where beyond the overall U.S. QA/QC plan, and any key findings.

Recalculations: A discussion of any data or methodological changes that necessitate a recalculation of previous years' emission estimates, and the impact of the recalculation on the emission estimates, if applicable.

Planned Improvements: A discussion on any source-specific planned improvements, if applicable.

Special attention is given to CO₂ from fossil fuel combustion relative to other sources because of its share of emissions and its dominant influence on emission trends. For example, each energy consuming end-use sector (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial, and transportation), as well as the electricity generation sector, is described individually. Additional information for certain source categories and other topics is also provided in several Annexes listed in Table 1-7.

Table 1-7: List of Annexes

ANNEX 1	Key Category Analysis
ANNEX 2	Methodology and Data for Estimating CO ₂ Emissions from Fossil Fuel Combustion
2.1.	Methodology for Estimating Emissions of CO ₂ from Fossil Fuel Combustion
2.2.	Methodology for Estimating the Carbon Content of Fossil Fuels
2.3.	Methodology for Estimating Carbon Emitted from Non-Energy Uses of Fossil Fuels
ANNEX 3	Methodological Descriptions for Additional Source or Sink Categories
3.1.	Methodology for Estimating Emissions of CH ₄ , N ₂ O, and Indirect Greenhouse Gases from Stationary Combustion
3.2.	Methodology for Estimating Emissions of CH ₄ , N ₂ O, and Indirect Greenhouse Gases from Mobile Combustion and Methodology for and Supplemental Information on Transportation-Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions
3.3.	Methodology for Estimating Emissions from Commercial Aircraft Jet Fuel Consumption
3.4.	Methodology for Estimating CH ₄ Emissions from Coal Mining
3.5.	Methodology for Estimating CH ₄ and CO ₂ Emissions from Petroleum Systems
3.6.	Methodology for Estimating CH ₄ Emissions from Natural Gas Systems
3.7.	Methodology for Estimating CO ₂ and N ₂ O Emissions from Incineration of Waste
3.8.	Methodology for Estimating Emissions from International Bunker Fuels used by the U.S. Military
3.9.	Methodology for Estimating HFC and PFC Emissions from Substitution of Ozone Depleting Substances
3.10.	Methodology for Estimating CH ₄ Emissions from Enteric Fermentation
3.11.	Methodology for Estimating CH ₄ and N ₂ O Emissions from Manure Management
3.12.	Methodology for Estimating N ₂ O Emissions, CH ₄ Emissions and Soil Organic C Stock Changes from Agricultural Lands (Cropland and Grassland)
3.13.	Methodology for Estimating Net Carbon Stock Changes in Forest Land Remaining Forest Land and Land Converted to Forest Land
3.14.	Methodology for Estimating CH ₄ Emissions from Landfills
ANNEX 4	IPCC Reference Approach for Estimating CO ₂ Emissions from Fossil Fuel Combustion
ANNEX 5	Assessment of the Sources and Sinks of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Not Included
ANNEX 6	Additional Information
6.1.	Global Warming Potential Values
6.2.	Ozone Depleting Substance Emissions
6.3.	Sulfur Dioxide Emissions
6.4.	Complete List of Source Categories
6.5.	Constants, Units, and Conversions

- 6.6. Abbreviations
- 6.7. Chemical Formulas
- ANNEX 7 Uncertainty
 - 7.1. Overview
 - 7.2. Methodology and Results
 - 7.3. Planned Improvements
- ANNEX 8 QA/QC Procedures
 - 8.1. Background
 - 8.2. Purpose
 - 8.3. Assessment Factors