



## Montreal Protocol Commits to HFC Management Amendment

*27<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol Addresses Global HFC Phase-Down*



For more than a year, we've discussed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) actions to prohibit the use of hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) refrigerants in certain commercial refrigeration and air conditioning applications, as well as expand the list of low-global warming potential (GWP) alternatives. But while these actions have focused on U.S. and North American initiatives, the move to limit HFCs is also picking up steam on a global level.

Last November at the 27<sup>th</sup> international meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Article 5 (developing) and non-Article 5 (developed) nations alike came together and committed to reduce worldwide greenhouse gas emissions from HFCs.<sup>1</sup> The meeting concluded with an agreement to phase down HFC consumption by completing an amendment to the Montreal Protocol in 2016.

It's an important reminder that a global commitment to responsible environmental stewardship is nothing new. First signed on September 16, 1987, the Montreal Protocol treaty has served as an example of decades-long cooperation among world governments, industry and the environmental community. With every country within the United Nations charter a signatory to the agreement, it is considered one of the most effective multi-lateral

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environmental treaties ever negotiated.

The original treaty's first order of business was to achieve a rapid phase-out of ozone-depleting substances — particularly chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) — by replacing them with HFC-based alternatives. While scientists are projecting a full restoration of the ozone by 2050,<sup>2</sup> they are also cautioning against the continued widespread global use of HFC refrigerants due to their environmental dangers.

As we know, HFCs are used in everything from air conditioners and refrigerators to foam insulation and fire protection systems. And while the U.S. and the European Union (EU) are well down the path of phasing out HFC use in specific applications, the demand for these technologies continues to grow in developing countries where they provide added health, safety, comfort and productivity benefits.

Because of this, the Parties of the Protocol have considered the issues of HFC usage and emissions for more than five years. During this time, the EPA's SNAP rulings and the European Union's F-Gas regulations provided viable examples of official policies to limit the use of HFCs. This is important because it set a precedent for responding to the global HFC challenge.

Private companies and industry coalitions have already answered the call to develop low-GWP technologies and

HFC replacement alternatives — and will continue to do so in support of future amendments to the Montreal Protocol. The Alliance for Responsible Atmospheric Policy is one such example.

Lennox International's John Hurst, who serves as the Alliance chairman, expressed their commitment in a press release immediately following the 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

"We are working rapidly to set the stage for an amendment to the Montreal Protocol which we believe can most effectively promote the availability of low-GWP replacement compounds and technologies," Hurst said.<sup>3</sup>

The Montreal Protocol's success was founded on its reliance on sound scientific reviews, ongoing technology assessments and a funding mechanism to assist developing countries. The Parties of the Protocol's decision to address the HFC issue with an amendment in 2016 is largely focused on helping developing countries make the transition to low-GWP technologies, while accelerating HFC phase-down schedules in developed countries. The amendment will likely contain the following components:

- Technology conversion and HFC phase-down schedules
- Financing for developing countries
- Possible exemptions for those in high ambient temperature conditions

- Interim reviews to assess technologies and progress

The history of the Montreal Protocol demonstrates that once a reduction schedule is set, industry responds with rapid development and deployment of alternatives.<sup>4</sup> The Parties to the Protocol agree on reduction schedules based upon the knowledge available at the time, and are asked to be open to schedule modifications due to scientific discoveries and/or technological advances.

While the details of the amendment are still unclear, it is certain that efforts to phase down HFCs will soon have a global driver. Many of us in the U.S. are already in the process of reducing HFCs and therefore have a head start in making this transition. As negotiations continue to take place throughout the year and an amendment to the Montreal Protocol is drafted, we will keep you updated on its progress and the implications to our industry.

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## References

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