

Fast Facts

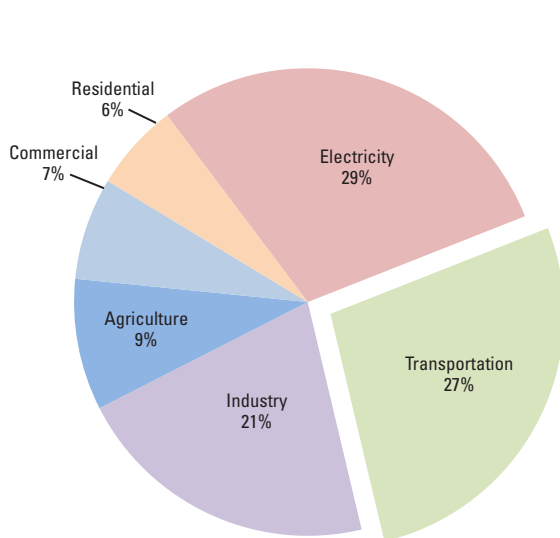
U.S. Transportation Sector Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990–2015



Transportation Emissions of the United States

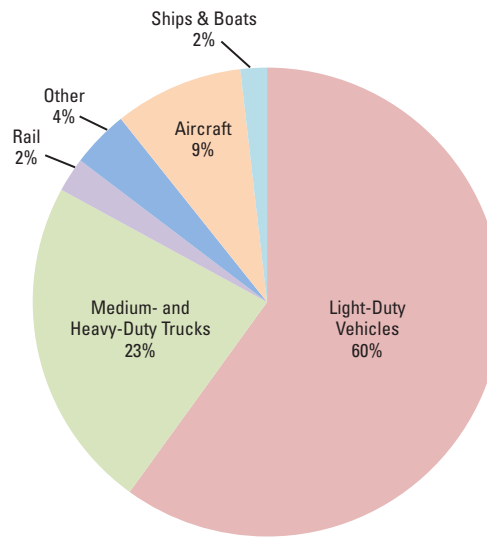
The transportation sector is one of the largest contributors to U.S. greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. According to the *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks 1990–2015* (the Inventory), the national inventory that the U.S. prepares annually under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), transportation represented 27% of total U.S. GHG emissions in 2015. Cars, trucks, commercial aircraft, and railroads, among other sources, all contribute to transportation end-use sector emissions. Within the sector, light-duty vehicles (including passenger cars and light-duty trucks) were by far the largest category, with 60% of GHG emissions, while medium- and heavy-duty trucks made up the second largest category, with 23% of emissions. Between 1990 and 2015, GHG emissions in the transportation sector increased more in absolute terms than any other sector (i.e. electricity generation, industry, agriculture, residential, or commercial) due in large part to increased demand for travel.

Greenhouse gas emissions from transportation sources include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and various hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O are all emitted via the combustion of fuels, while HFC emissions are the result of leaks and end-of-life disposal from air conditioners used to cool people and/or freight.²



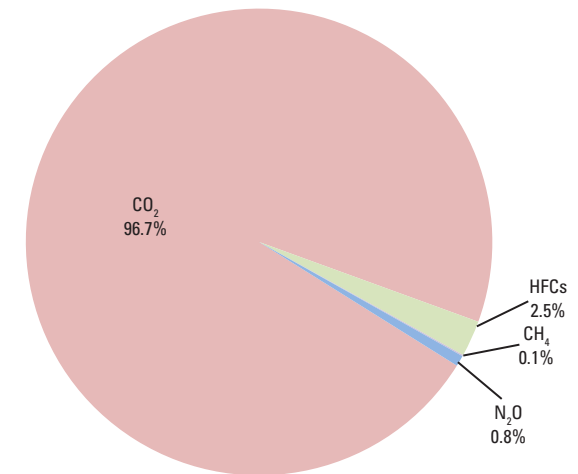
Share of U.S. GHG Emissions by Sector, 2015^{3,4}

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.



Share of U.S. Transportation Sector GHG Emissions by Source, 2015^{4,5}

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.



Share of U.S. Transportation Sector GHG Emissions by Gas, 2015⁴

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Mobile Sources	
Transportation	Non-Transportation Mobile
Highway Vehicles	Agricultural Equipment
Aircraft	Construction & Mining Equipment
Ships & Boats	Lawn & Garden Equipment
Rail	Logging Equipment
Lubricants	Recreational Equipment
Pipelines ¹	

When including emissions from *non-transportation* mobile sources such as agricultural, lawn and garden, and construction equipment, mobile sources constituted 31% of total U.S. GHG emissions in 2015.

¹ Pipeline emissions in the transportation sector include only CO₂ from the combustion of natural gas at compressor stations that power natural gas pipelines, not emissions from electricity use, non-CO₂ gases, or other types of pipeline equipment. Note that natural gas pipeline compressor stations are stationary equipment that are included in the transportation sector, but are not considered mobile sources.

² CO₂ emissions from the combustion of biofuels are not directly included in the energy sector contribution (which includes the contribution of transportation and non-transportation mobile sources) to U.S. totals in the Inventory; instead, net carbon fluxes from changes in biogenic carbon reservoirs are accounted in the estimates for Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry in the Inventory. See page 4 for more information on the Inventory.

³ For presentation purposes, emissions from territories which constitute less than 1% of the total U.S. GHG emissions, are not shown in this chart although they are included in the total emissions used to calculate the percentage share of emissions from each sector. See Table ES-6 in the Executive Summary of the Inventory for official data. See page 4 for more information on the Inventory.

⁴ "Transportation" emissions in these pie charts include CO₂, N₂O, CH₄, and HFCs from transportation sources like highway vehicles, aircraft, ships and boats, rail, pipelines and lubricants. They do not include emissions from non-transportation mobile sources such as agriculture and construction equipment.

⁵ "Other" sources include buses, motorcycles, pipelines, and lubricants.

U.S. Transportation GHG Emissions (Tg CO₂ Equivalent)

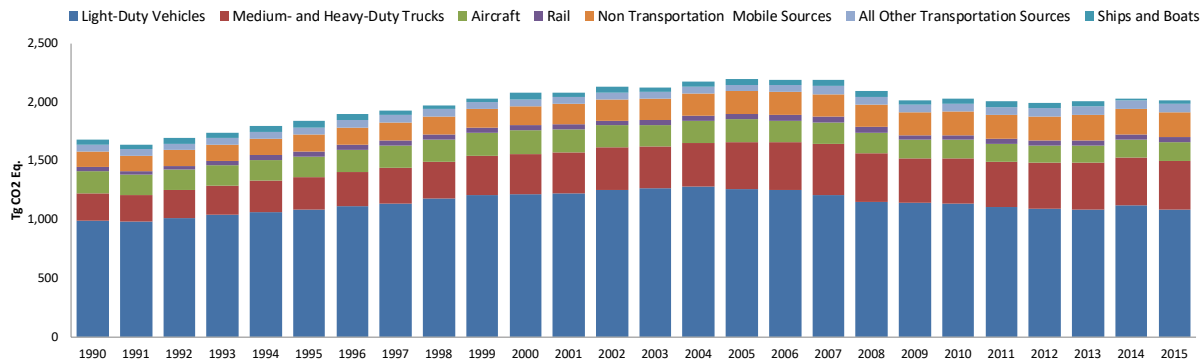
Change from
1990 to 2015⁶

Source	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2014	2015 ⁶	Absolute	Percent
On-Road Vehicles^{6,7}	1,233.5	1,370.4	1,572.6	1,673.4	1,541.3	1,553.8	1,522.0	288.5	23.4
Light-Duty Vehicles	991.9	1,083.1	1,212.1	1,260.9	1,132.0	1,122.1	1,083.5	91.7	9.2
Passenger Cars	656.7	646.6	697.2	708.7	783.4	778.4	758.4	101.8	15.5
Light-Duty Trucks	335.2	436.5	514.9	552.2	348.7	343.7	325.1	-10.1	-3.0
Motorcycles	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.7	3.7	3.9	3.7	2.0	110.2
Buses	8.5	9.2	11.0	12.0	15.9	19.5	19.8	11.3	134.0
Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks	231.4	276.2	347.7	398.9	389.7	408.3	415.0	183.6	79.3
Aircraft	189.2	176.7	199.4	193.6	154.8	151.5	160.7	-28.5	-15.1
Commercial Aviation	110.9	116.3	140.6	134.0	114.4	116.3	120.1	9.2	8.3
Military Aircraft	35.3	24.5	22.9	19.5	13.7	15.5	14.9	-20.5	-57.9
General Aviation	42.9	35.8	35.9	40.1	26.7	19.7	25.7	-17.2	-40.1
Ships and Boats	44.9	58.5	61.3	45.0	44.9	17.6	33.1	-11.8	-26.4
Rail	35.8	40.0	42.7	46.4	40.2	44.4	42.9	7.1	19.8
Pipelines⁸	36.0	38.4	35.4	32.4	37.3	39.4	38.0	1.9	5.4
Lubricants	11.8	11.3	12.1	10.2	9.5	9.1	10.0	-1.9	-15.8
Transportation Total	1,551.2	1,695.2	1,923.5	2,001.0	1,827.9	1,815.8	1,806.6	255.4	16.5

U.S. Non-Transportation Mobile GHG Emissions

Non-Transportation Mobile ^{6,9}	128.8	146.7	159.5	191.8	203.1	213.9	208.1	79.3	61.6
Agricultural Equipment	31.4	37.0	39.7	47.9	48.4	51.3	48.0	16.6	52.9
Construction Equipment	42.4	49.3	56.6	67.4	74.0	80.4	78.8	36.4	85.9
Other Non-Transportation Mobile	55.0	60.4	63.2	76.5	80.7	82.2	81.3	26.3	47.8
Non-Transportation + Transportation Total	1,680.0	1,841.9	2,083.0	2,192.8	2,031.0	2,029.7	2,014.7	334.7	19.9

Change in GHG Emissions by Sector: 1990–2015



U.S. Transportation GHG Emissions by Gas, 2015 (Tg CO₂ Equivalent)

Source	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	HFCs	Total	Percent
On-Road Vehicles⁷	1,467.0	1.5	11.2	42.3	1,522.0	75.5
Light-Duty Vehicles	1,033.7	1.3	10.3	38.3	1,083.5	53.8
Passenger Cars	735.7	1.0	6.9	14.9	758.4	37.6
Light-Duty Trucks	298.0	0.3	3.4	23.4	325.1	16.1
Motorcycles	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.2
Buses	19.3	0.0	0.1	0.4	19.8	1.0
Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks	410.4	0.1	0.8	3.6	415.0	20.6
Aircraft	159.2	0.0	1.5	0.0	160.7	8.0
Commercial Aviation	119.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	120.1	6.0
Military Aircraft	14.7	0.0	0.1	0.0	14.9	0.7
General Aviation	25.5	0.0	0.2	0.0	25.7	1.3
Ships and Boats	32.3	0.0	0.6	0.1	33.1	1.6
Rail	39.9	0.1	0.3	2.7	42.9	2.1
Pipelines⁸	38.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.0	1.9
Lubricants	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.5
Transportation Total	1,746.3	1.6	13.6	45.1	1,806.6	89.7
Rail Electricity	3.72	0.00	0.04	0.00	3.76	NA

U.S. Non-Transportation Mobile GHG Emissions by Gas, 2015

Non-Transportation Mobile ⁹	206.1	0.4	1.6	0.0	208.1	10.3
Agricultural Equipment	47.5	0.2	0.4	0.0	48.0	2.4
Construction Equipment	78.1	0.1	0.6	0.0	78.8	3.9
Other Non-Transportation Mobile	80.6	0.1	0.6	0.0	81.3	4.0
Non-Transportation + Transportation Total	1,952.5	2.0	15.1	45.1	2,014.7	100.0

⁶ The methodology for estimating the share of gasoline used in on-road and non-road applications was updated in 2016, resulting in a break in the time series between 2015 and previous years. See page 4 for more details.

⁷ GHG emissions and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) estimates for on-road vehicles presented in the Inventory are based on FHWA data. FHWA changed its methods for estimating (VMT) and related data in 2011. These methodological changes included how vehicles are classified, moving from a system based on body-type to one that is based on wheelbase. These changes were first incorporated for the 2010 Inventory and apply to the 2007–14 time period. This resulted in large changes in VMT and fuel consumption data by vehicle class, thus leading to a shift in emissions among on-road vehicle classes. For instance, “passenger car” has been replaced by “light-duty vehicles short WB” and “other 2-axle 4-tire vehicles” has been replaced by “light-duty vehicles long WB.”

⁸ Includes only CO₂ from natural gas used to power natural gas pipelines, does not include emissions from electricity use or non-CO₂ gases.

⁹ Note: non-transportation CO₂ emissions estimates are presented here and in Annex 3.2 of the Inventory for informational purposes, but these emissions are officially accounted for in other energy sectors in the Inventory (i.e., industrial, residential, commercial sectors) using a different method. See Annex 3.2, *Supplemental Information on Transportation-Related GHG Emissions*, of the Inventory for more information.

2015 Fuel Consumption

	Volume (billion gallons unless otherwise specified)	Energy (Tbtu)	CO ₂ (Tg)
MOTOR GASOLINE	127.1	15,779.0	1,125.5
Transportation¹⁰			
Light-Duty Vehicles	114.4	14,220.9	1,014.5
Passenger Cars	82.4	10,251.0	731.3
Light-Duty Trucks	31.9	3,969.9	283.2
Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks	4.4	550.6	39.3
Motorcycles	0.4	51.3	3.7
Buses	0.1	12.5	0.9
Recreational Boats	1.4	170.4	12.2
Non-Transportation¹¹			
Agricultural Equipment	0.2	19.1	1.4
Construction Equipment	0.4	44.3	3.2
Other Non-Transportation Mobile	5.9	710.0	50.5
DISTILLATE FUEL	60.2	8,272.7	611.8
Transportation¹⁰			
Light-Duty Vehicles	1.8	246.4	18.2
Passenger Cars	0.4	58.1	4.3
Light-Duty Trucks	1.4	188.3	13.9
Buses	1.7	234.0	17.3
Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks	36.3	4,994.4	369.4
Recreational Boats	0.4	52.8	3.9
Ships and Boats	1.2	162.7	12.0
Rail	3.9	539.1	39.9
Non-Transportation¹¹			
Agricultural Equipment	4.5	623.2	46.1
Construction Equipment	7.4	1,013.2	74.9
Other Non-Transportation Mobile	3.0	406.9	30.1
RESIDUAL FUEL OIL	0.4	56.6	4.2
Ships and Boats	0.4	56.6	4.2
JET FUEL	16.2	2,183.8	157.7
Commercial Aircraft	12.5	1,692.1	119.0
General Aviation Aircraft	2.3	304.8	24.0
Military Aircraft	1.4	186.9	14.7

	Volume (billion gallons unless otherwise specified)	Energy (Tbtu)	CO ₂ (Tg)
AVIATION GASOLINE	0.2	21.1	1.5
General Aviation Aircraft	0.2	21.1	1.5
NATURAL GAS (million cubic feet)	705,593.1	731.7	38.8
Passenger Cars	68.5	0.1	0.0
Light-Duty Trucks	218.1	0.2	0.0
Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks	517.9	0.5	0.0
Buses	13,925.9	14.4	0.8
Pipelines	690,862.5	716.4	38.0
LPG	0.6	48.3	3.0
Passenger Cars	0.0	1.1	0.1
Light-Duty Trucks	0.2	14.2	0.9
Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks	0.3	28.0	1.7
Buses	0.1	5.1	0.3
LUBRICANTS	1.0	148.1	10.0
Total¹²	211.7	27,241.4	1,952.5

BIOFUELS			
Transportation			
<i>Biodiesel¹³</i>	1.5	190.6	14.1
<i>Ethanol¹³</i>	13.1	1,109.4	75.9

¹⁰ Fuel consumption, energy, and CO₂ emissions from transportation sources using motor gasoline and distillate fuel exclude contributions from biofuels.

¹¹ Non-transportation mobile fuel consumption, energy, and CO₂ are estimated based on the NONROAD component of EPA's MOVES model (see www.epa.gov/moves/nonroad-model-nonroad-engines-equipment-and-vehicles). Because the fuel composition in the NONROAD model is intended to reflect real-world usage, these estimates may include low-level ethanol blends. Note that these estimates are presented here and in Annex 3.2 of the Inventory for informational purposes, but that non-transportation mobile source CO₂ emissions are officially accounted for in other energy sectors in the Inventory (e.g., the industrial sector) using a different method and do not include emissions from biofuels.

¹² Total Volume is the sum of physical (billion) gallons of fuel; because natural gas volumes are reported as million cubic feet, natural gas volumes are converted to billion gallons of gasoline equivalent for the Total Volume (billion gallons) sum in this table.

¹³ Biofuels are presented as line items below the total for informational purposes only, in line with IPCC methodological guidance and UNFCCC reporting obligations. Biofuel estimates only reflect transportation sources and do not include biofuels used in non-transportation mobile sources, e.g., ethanol used in commercial or industrial applications. CO₂ emissions from the combustion of biofuels are not directly included in the energy sector contribution (which includes the contribution of transportation sources) to U.S. totals in the Inventory; instead, net carbon fluxes from changes in biogenic carbon reservoirs are accounted in the estimates for Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry in the Inventory. See page 4 for more information on the Inventory.

Additional Information

Data Sources for This Document

The source for all data in this document is the *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks 1990–2015* (the Inventory) (EPA 2017). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency prepares the inventory annually to fulfill the U.S. commitment under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), using calculation methods that are consistent with guidelines from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Complete information on the inventory is available at: www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/inventory-us-greenhouse-gas-emissions-and-sinks. The inventory methods and assumptions related to transportation and non-transportation mobile sources are available in the main body of the Inventory as well as Annex 3.2 of the Inventory.

Inventory Definitions of Selected Transportation Categories¹⁴

Light-Duty Vehicles: passenger cars and light-duty trucks



Passenger Cars:¹⁵ automobiles used primarily to transport 12 people or less. In 2015, passenger cars traveled a total of 2,147,840 million vehicle miles.



Light-Duty Trucks:¹⁵ vehicles used primarily for transporting light-weight cargo or which are equipped with special features such as four-wheel drive for off-road operation. In the U.S., this category also includes many vehicles that primarily transport passengers such as sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and minivans. The gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) normally ranges around 8,500 pounds or less. GVWR is the maximum weight a vehicle is designed to carry when passengers, fuel, cargo, and any other additions to the vehicle are accounted for. In 2015, light-duty trucks traveled a total of 631,852 million vehicle miles.



Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks:¹⁵ vehicles with GVWR of more than around 8,500 pounds. In the Inventory, single unit trucks and combination trucks represent the medium- and heavy-duty truck category, including tractor-trailers and box trucks used for freight transportation. In addition, this category includes some vehicles that are not typically used for freight movement such as service and utility trucks. In 2015, medium- and heavy-duty trucks traveled a total of 296,073 million vehicle miles.



Pipelines: systems that transport liquids, gases, or slurries through either above or below ground pipes. In the Inventory, the pipelines category includes emissions from the combustion of natural gas used to power pumps and other distribution equipment, while leaks and other emission sources from pipelines are assigned to the natural gas systems category.

Emissions Metrics

A teragram (Tg) is equal to 1 million metric tons.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are measured in this document in terms of teragrams of “carbon dioxide equivalent” (CO₂ Eq); an “equivalent” refers to the Global Warming Potential (GWP) of a greenhouse gas. GWP values are determined based on the chosen time horizon and properties of the gas, such as its ability to absorb radiation and its atmospheric lifetime. CO₂ has a GWP of “1”; all other greenhouse gases have GWP values relative to that of CO₂. For example, methane (CH₄) has a radiative forcing value or GWP of 25, which means that releasing one ton of CH₄ is equivalent to releasing 25 tons of CO₂.

The data in this document is based on the 100-year time horizon GWP values from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC’s) Fourth Assessment Report¹⁶, in accordance with UNFCCC reporting guidelines for national GHG inventories. More information on greenhouse gases and GWP is available at: www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/overview-greenhouse-gases.

Gasoline Method Update for 2015

In 2016, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) updated its methods for estimating the share of gasoline used in on-road and non-road applications. While these methodology updates did not impact total U.S. gasoline consumption estimates in the Inventory, they did create a time-series inconsistency between 2015 and previous years in gasoline consumption estimates for transportation, as well as agricultural, construction, commercial, and industrial non-transportation mobile sources. The method updates are discussed further in the *Planned Improvements* sections of Chapter 3.1 of the Inventory under CO₂ from Fossil Fuel Combustion and CH₄ and N₂O from Mobile Combustion.

¹⁴ The data used to estimate emissions for specific transportation categories may not directly align with the Inventory’s definition of the categories; both the data and Inventory definitions may also differ from EPA’s regulatory definitions for the same categories.

¹⁵ GHG emissions and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) estimates for on-road vehicles presented in the Inventory are based on FHWA data. FHWA changed its methods for estimating (VMT) and related data in 2011. These methodological changes included how vehicles are classified, moving from a system based on body-type to one that is based on wheelbase. These changes were first incorporated for the 2010 Inventory and apply to the 2007–15 time period. This resulted in large changes in VMT and fuel consumption data by vehicle class, thus leading to a shift in emissions among on-road vehicle classes. For instance, “passenger car” has been replaced by “light duty vehicles short WB” and “other 2-axle 4-tire vehicles” has been replaced by “light duty vehicles long WB.”

¹⁶ See www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr.pdf.