

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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April 3, 2009

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to encourage the Administration to offer an amendment to the Montreal Protocol this year to regulate the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which are extremely potent greenhouse gases. To prevent catastrophic climate change, the United States and countries around the world will need to take a variety of steps. Although we strongly support a comprehensive international agreement on climate change, we believe that adding HFCs to the existing Montreal Protocol would be a sensible, cost-effective method of addressing a small but growing piece of the problem.

The Montreal Protocol is widely recognized as a tremendously successful international environmental agreement. It was negotiated in 1987 to stop the depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer by human-produced chemicals such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs). As a result of the Montreal Protocol's legally binding controls on the production and consumption of ozone depleting substances, global emissions of these gases are a small fraction of their 1990 levels. Although we still have a way to go, the ozone layer is on the path to recovery.

The Montreal Protocol has also provided substantial global warming benefits because ozone depleting chemicals like CFCs and HCFCs are also potent greenhouse gases. According to a recent scientific study, the Montreal Protocol will have reduced the total global warming impact from ozone depleting chemicals by about 50% in 2010.¹ This reduction will have the effect of delaying climate-related impacts by seven to twelve years.² In other words, without the Montreal Protocol, the world would be about a

¹ Proceedings of the National Academies of Science, *The Importance of the Montreal Protocol in Protecting Climate* (Mar. 20, 2007).

² *Id.*

decade further along the path to dangerous climate change, even after accounting for the global warming potential of HCFC substitutes.

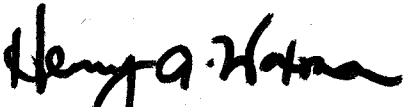
HFCs are the most common substitute for HCFCs. Although HFCs do not deplete the ozone layer, they are powerful greenhouse gases. HFCs currently account for only 2% of greenhouse gas emissions. Absent a new international agreement, however, HFC emissions are expected to steadily climb as HCFCs are phased-out.

We believe there are compelling reasons to take the approach that has worked so well and amend the Montreal Protocol to include a phase down of HFCs. The Protocol, which has been ratified by 194 countries, includes all of the key producer and user countries. Because the producers and users of HFCs overlap considerably with those of HCFCs, these stakeholders are already familiar with the Montreal Protocol process. The Montreal Protocol framework has Parties and staff with the technical expertise to phase-down HFCs, effective mechanisms for technology transfer, and a Multilateral Fund to assist developing countries with their phase-downs. The Parties have already acknowledged the importance of integrating climate change objectives into the Protocol.

The 21st Meeting of the Parties of the Montreal Protocol in November 2009 offers your Administration an early opportunity to restore U.S. leadership on climate and to create momentum for the December climate negotiations in Copenhagen. The Montreal Protocol framework has fostered successful international cooperation for over 20 years and can do so again. Proposing an amendment by the May deadline would send a strong signal that the U.S. is serious about tackling climate change.

Climate change is an enormous challenge. We look forward to working with you to harness the full potential of the Montreal Protocol to help meet this challenge.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce



Edward J. Markey
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and
Environment

cc: Joe Barton
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Fred Upton
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Environment