

The Emissions Landscape

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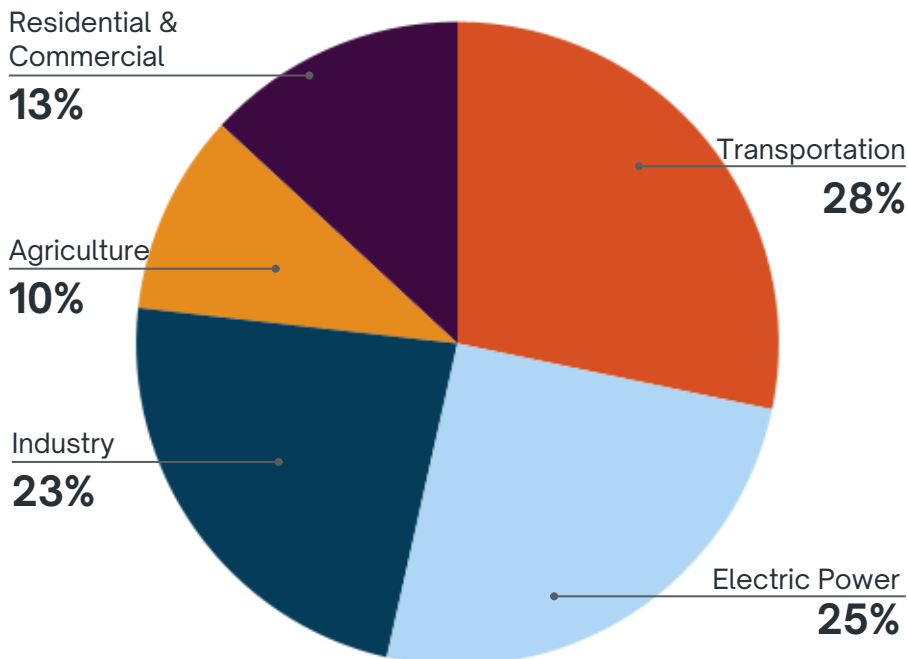
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What activities emit greenhouse gases?

Every sector of the U.S. economy is responsible for greenhouse gas emissions. The chart below visualizes which sectors contribute the most.

Total U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Economic Sector in 2022



The data in the figure is drawn from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and does not include electricity end-use indirect emissions. According to the EPA, "Greenhouse gas emissions from the commercial, residential, and industrial sectors increase substantially when indirect emissions from electricity end-use are included, due to the relatively large share of electricity use by buildings."

Transportation

Transportation generated the largest proportion of emissions in 2022, mostly from the burning of gasoline and diesel in cars, trucks, planes, ships, and trains.

Electric Power

According to the EPA, 60% of our electricity comes from burning fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas.

Industry

Industrial emissions primarily stem from burning fossil fuels and the manufacturing of goods from raw materials.

Agriculture

Agricultural emissions in the US mostly result from livestock digestion, fertilizer application, and soil and manure management.

Commercial & Residential

Most commercial and residential emissions are due to the burning of fossil fuels for heating and cooling.

SO Why should judges care ?

Climate cases often concern sources of emissions, so it's important to be familiar with a breakdown of emissions by sector.



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Sources

United States Environmental Protection Agency, *Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions* (last updated: March 31, 2025), <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>.



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