

Greenpeace: Éliminer les HFC pour lutter contre le réchauffement planétaire

Greenpeace: Eliminate HFCs to combat global warming

By Andrew Williams, Jan 03, 2017 • 4 minute reading

L'élimination le plus tôt possible des gaz HFC est la mesure la plus facilement disponible à court terme pour lutter contre le réchauffement climatique. "

Eliminating hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) is the most readily available short-term measure to combat global warming, argues the environmental NGO.



Eliminating consumption and production of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) is the most readily available short-term measure to combat global warming, Paula Tejón Carbajal, Greenpeace International, told this website in an exclusive interview.

Greenpeace has been warning the international community of the climate threat posed by the large-scale uptake of HFCs since the early 1990s.

The Kigali Amendment – agreed last October and which is legally binding for all 197 Parties to the Montreal Protocol – sees developed countries take the lead on phasing down HFCs, starting with a 10% reduction in 2019 and delivering an 85% cut in 2036 (compared to the 2011-2013 baseline).

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- Paula Tejón Carbajal, Greenpeace International

“We need to stay below 1.5°C of global warming to alleviate its worst effects, and we only have a few more years to take action before damage to the planet becomes irreversible. We need transformational change, not just incremental change,” Carbajal said.

“Viewed from this perspective, the Kigali Agreement certainly does not go far enough. ‘Far enough’ can only mean the earliest possible elimination of all unnecessary sources of HFCs,” she argued.

The Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol splits developing countries into two groups. The first one – which includes China and African nations – will freeze consumption of HFCs by 2024, with their first reduction steps starting in 2029. A second group including India, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and the Gulf countries will meet a later deadline, freezing their use of these gases in 2028 and reducing consumption from 2032.

“The earliest possible elimination of HFCs is the most readily available measure in the short term to combat global warming and to try to avoid climate tipping points,” Carbajal argued.

Greenpeace wants to see a global phase-out of HFCs by 2020 in all applications where safer and more sustainable alternatives are readily available, and is calling for a global phase-out of all production and consumption of HFCs by 2025.

«Tenir l'industrie chimique responsable» pour les HFO

‘Hold the chemical industry accountable’ for HFOs

Au fur et à mesure que les pays commencent à réduire progressivement les HFC, Greenpeace souligne l'importance d'adopter des réfrigérants naturels comme des solutions de rechange au marché plutôt que des réfrigérants synthétiques appelés les hydrofluorooléfines (HFO).

"L'industrie chimique [...] parie sur les HFO pour maintenir le monopole mondial de plusieurs milliards de dollars sur le marché de la réfrigération dont elle a bénéficié avec les CFC, les HCFC et les HFC"

As countries begin to phase down HFCs, Greenpeace stresses the importance of adopting natural refrigerants as market-ready alternatives rather than synthetic refrigerants – so-called hydrofluoroolefins (HFOs).

“The chemical industry [...] is betting on HFOs to maintain the multibillion dollar global monopoly over the refrigeration market it has enjoyed with CFCs, HCFCs and HFCs,” said Carbajal.

Pour s'assurer que les réfrigérants naturels peuvent être sur le même pied d'égalité concurrentiel que les HFO, Greenpeace appelle les experts de l'industrie des réfrigérants naturels à être «suffisamment représentés» au sein des comités internationaux et nationaux de normalisation. À leur tour, ces organismes de normalisation doivent veiller à supprimer les "normes réglementaires obsolètes" qui empêchent actuellement une absorption plus large des réfrigérants naturels, a fait valoir Carbajal.

Elle a accusé l'industrie chimique d'avoir «un bilan regrettable avec ses produits CFC, HCFC et HFC. Ils ont causé des dommages importants à l'environnement et menacé la vie sur la planète » et « les coûts de nettoyage ont été laissés à la charge du public ».

Selon Carbajal, « il n'y a aucune raison crédible pour que les gouvernements acceptent les allégations de l'industrie au sujet de la sécurité et des avantages technologiques des HFO ». « Qui paiera les coûts d'atténuation si la production à grande échelle de HFO entraîne une nouvelle crise mondiale? Greenpeace appelle les gouvernements à tenir l'industrie chimique responsable », a telle dit.

Plus précisément, Greenpeace appelle les gouvernements à exiger de l'industrie de s'engager « à payer tous les coûts d'atténuation, par le biais d'un contrat de responsabilité, si la production à grande échelle de HFO à l'avenir entraîne de graves dommages à l'environnement», a telle expliqué.

To ensure that natural refrigerants can compete on a level playing field with HFOs, Greenpeace is calling for experts from the natural refrigerants industry to be “sufficiently represented” on international and national standards committees. In turn, these standards bodies must ensure the removal of “obsolete regulatory standards” currently preventing wider uptake of natural refrigerants, Carbajal argued.

She accused the chemical industry of having “a sorry track record with its CFC, HCFC and HFC products. They have caused extensive environmental damage and endangered life on the planet” and “the costs of cleaning up have been left to the public purse”.

In Carbajal's opinion, "there is no credible reason for governments to accept at face value industry's claims regarding the safety and technological benefits of HFOs". "Who will pay the mitigation costs should the large-scale production of HFOs result in yet another global crisis? Greenpeace calls for governments to hold the chemical industry accountable," she said.

Specifically, Greenpeace is calling on governments to require industry to commit "to paying for all mitigating costs, through a liability contract, should the large-scale production of HFOs in the future result in severe damage to the environment," she explained.

Trump election brings climate of uncertainty

Despite hailing the Kigali deal as an important step towards regulating HFCs, Greenpeace is also warning that the subsequent election of Donald Trump as president of the United States has introduced a new layer of uncertainty in terms of phasing down these climate pollutants.

"The chemical industry lobbied vigorously for this agreement because the patents on HFCs will soon expire and the industry needed the regulatory framework in the global market to support its new generation of fluorocarbon products: HFOs," Carbajal said.

"The fact that some powerful American corporations back the Kigali Agreement may prove to be its salvation, as a Trump Presidency will likely act on behalf of such interests," she argued.

"The Trump administration could also unravel the Agreement by withholding committed funds," she warned.