

# Clean Air Act of 1970

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# Summary

- The CAA was enacted in 1970
- The law aims to regulate the emissions of harmful pollutants from both stationary and mobile sources
- Authorizes the EPA to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect public health
- The CAA classifies what is and is not a source of pollution and sets goals for states to meet new standards
- The act was amended in both 1977 and 1990 to set new goals states to meet

# The Evolution

- **The Air Pollution Control Act of 1955**
- **The Clean Air Act of 1963**
- **The Air Quality Act of 1967**
- **Clean Air Act of 1970**
- **CAA amendments of 1977**
- **CAA amendments of 1990**

## Problems with The CAA

- Existing sources of pollution were given a near permanent exemption allowing them to continue to operate with little to no regulation
- “EPA’s efforts have been hampered by a tragic flaw in that statute: its exemption of existing industrial facilities—most notably, coal-fired power plants—from federal limits on some of the most common, and harmful, types of pollution” (Revesz and Lienke)

# US Pollution Statistics

- “In 2020, about 68 million tons of pollution were emitted into the atmosphere in the United States. These emissions mostly contribute to the formation of ozone and particles, the deposition of acids, and visibility impairment” (Air Quality)
- “In addition, from 1990 to 2017 emissions of air toxics declined by 74 percent, largely driven by federal and state implementation of stationary and mobile source regulations” (Air Quality)

# Solutions

- Reducing carbon footprint
- “Driving less, in favor of public transportation, biking, or walking, helps decrease air pollution. Also, using cars with increased fuel efficiency or electric cars that do not rely on fossil fuels can decrease the amount of pollution we are contributing to the atmosphere.”  
(Air Pollution)

# References

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