

Greenhouse gases from Scottish industry at a 10 year low

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Greenhouse gases emitted by Scottish industry continue to fall, according to the latest annual mass pollutant releases published by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

The figures, published online in the 2017 [Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory \(SPRI\)](#), show how the pollutants emitted by Scottish regulated businesses are changing as the country continues to move to a more sustainable, resource efficient Scotland.

We place pressures on the Scottish environment in our daily lives, from dealing with our sewage and waste to the demand for goods like petrol, plastics, food and drink. Scottish industry also puts pressures on the environment through emissions to the air and water environment and through waste management activities.

GHG levels have reduced 57% since 2007 when 26 Megatonnes (Mt) of pollutants were released. The 2017 total was 11 Mt. The largest drop came in 2016, as Longannet power station was only operational for the first few months of the year. There was a further reduction of 6% (just under 1 Mt) in 2017 as the first full year with no emissions from the plant.

	2007	2016	2017	Difference	
	Emissions (kg)	Emissions (kg)	Emissions (kg)	2007-2017	2016-2017
Carbon dioxide	26,549,962,881	12,124,897,286	11,371,844,762	down 57%	down 6%
Methane	70,774,750	34,751,851	32,430,019	down 54%	down 6%
Nitrous oxide	296,291	125,831	89,467	down 69%	down 28%
Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)	1,621	1,734	1,048	down 35%	down 39%
Perfluorocarbons (PFCs)	7,328	4,510	4,355	down 40%	down 3%
Sulphur hexafluoride	574	127	133	down 76%	up 5%
Total	26,621,043,445	12,159,781,339	11,404,369,784	down 57%	down 6%

Generally most pollutants decreased in 2017 from 2016 values or stayed marginally the same and the longer term trends mostly remain downward. Increases are mostly related to an increase in production or variations in combustion fuels. There were also 16 more sites reporting in 2017.

From climate change to the circular economy, Scotland is driving globally ambitious, internationally recognised policy with a purpose. It's policy that recognises the economic, as well as environmental, opportunity of a more sustainable, resource efficient Scotland.

Terry A'Hearn, Chief Executive of SEPA, said:

“The most successful countries in the 21st century will function within our planet’s means to support us. Through our regulatory strategy, One Plant Prosperity, SEPA is helping business grow sustainably while reducing their environmental burden.

“Whilst it’s encouraging to see greenhouse gases from Scottish industry at a ten year low, we recognise further progress needs to be made. The data that SPRI holds is vital to helping us understand how these changes are impacting on our environment both directly and indirectly, ensuring Scotland can identify priority areas to reduce releases and track progress.”

SPRI is a searchable database of annual mass releases of specified pollutants to air, water and land from SEPA regulated industrial sites. It also provides information about off-site transfers of waste from these sites. It does not assess the compliance of the facilities or the health and environmental impact of the releases. Site compliance can be found in [SEPA’s Compliance Assessment Scheme results](#).

Annual changes

Year-to-year changes in pollutants can often be attributed to changes at a few sites, due to increases or decreases in production, changing source products and new sites opening.

All pollutants have a reporting threshold, below which sites do not need to report to SPRI. An increase in production can move a site’s releases above the threshold, showing a large increase.

Ends

Notes to editors

The SPRI data can be accessed on Scotland’s Environment web at www.environment.gov.scot/data/data-analysis/scottish-pollution-release-inventory/

- There were 1,237 reporting sites in 2017, compared to 1,221 in 2016.
- Since 1993, owners or operators of facilities that have met the SPRI reporting requirements have reported on an annual basis. Data from SPRI data is used to fulfil the reporting requirements of the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (E-PRTR).
- Using the tool to compare facilities or sectors provides a general overview of the total amounts of pollutants released or waste transferred. However, direct and causal inferences should not be made because detailed knowledge of processes, installed abatement technologies and other installed emission reduction technologies and practices must be known before this type of analyses can be accurately and definitively performed. Further, the types and amounts of source material, management methods, production patterns, etc. must also be known.