

# Protecting Our Environment

## Clearing The Air About The Coal Industry

(NAPSA)—Thanks to cleaner air, consumers have been able to take a new look at coal.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as of 1999 emissions of air pollutants that affect human health have dropped below 1970 levels by 32 percent.

This improvement in air quality took place during a time when the U.S. population grew by 33 percent, the U.S. economy grew by 147 percent, and the use of coal to generate electricity increased by 188 percent.

Some of the credit can be attributed to America's coal-based electricity industry. Since 1970, the industry has invested over \$50 billion in new technologies to clean the air and protect our environment.

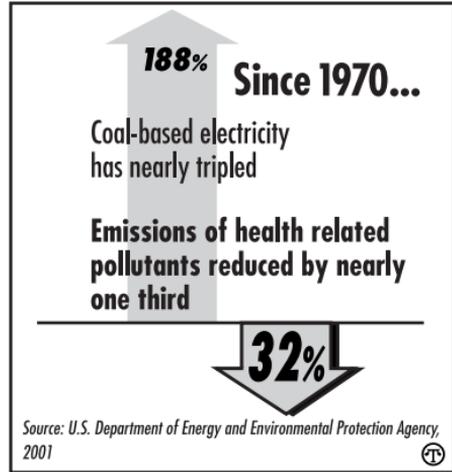
By developing new technologies, the coal-based electricity industry has not only succeeded in complying with strict federal clean air laws, but in some cases has exceeded them.

America's coal-based electricity industry has also responded to the issue of global climate change.

For example, America's electric utilities agreed to voluntarily reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 170 million metric tons in the year 2000. That is more than four times the goal set by federal regulators when this program was launched in 1993.

The environmental improvements and technological advances to date are just part of the story. It's estimated that the technology is on track to deploy coal-based energy plants that are virtually emissions-free beginning in 2020.

By investing in new technologies, the coal-based electricity industry has been able to improve environmental quality while continuing to supply low-cost electricity.



**Since 1970, coal-based electricity has nearly tripled, while emissions of health-related pollutants have decreased by nearly one-third.**

In many ways, coal makes low-cost electricity possible. The price paid for electricity depends largely on fuel costs. Abundant supplies of American coal help keep coal prices remarkably low and stable.

Unlike other fossil fuels used for electricity generation, coal prices have changed little since the 1980s. Over the past 20 years, the price of coal has increased only four percent, while crude oil prices increased 51 percent and natural gas prices increased a whopping 211 percent.

The cost of generating electricity with coal is about half the cost of using other fossil fuels. In 1999, cost of electricity from coal was about \$1.22 per million BTUs, compared to oil at \$2.53 per million BTUs, and natural gas-fired at \$2.57 per million BTUs.

Low-cost electricity remains essential to economic growth. It also helps to provide better quality of life for consumers and their families. Coal is the fuel that makes low-cost electricity possible.

To learn more about the role coal plays in U.S. environmental policy, visit [www.ceednet.org](http://www.ceednet.org).