

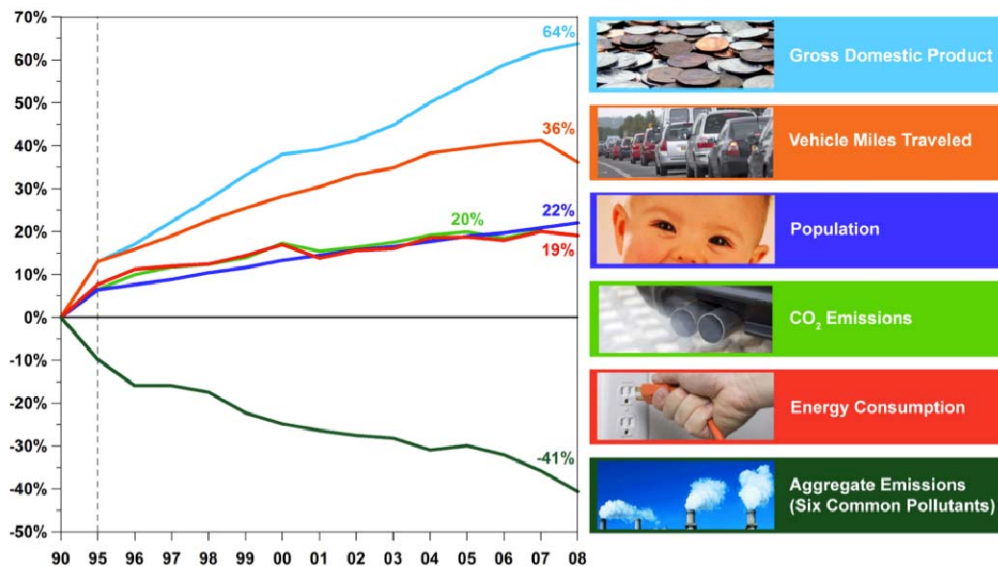
[The Air is Getting Cleaner: But the Media are Nowhere to be Seen](#)

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On Wednesday, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [quietly released](#) their [annual report on air quality trends](#). You would never know it from picking up a newspaper or reading news websites, but the report contains great news. Air quality in the United States has dramatically improved and, according to all indicators, it will continue to improve.

The Good News—the Air is Getting Cleaner

The report can be summed up with this graphic from EPA:



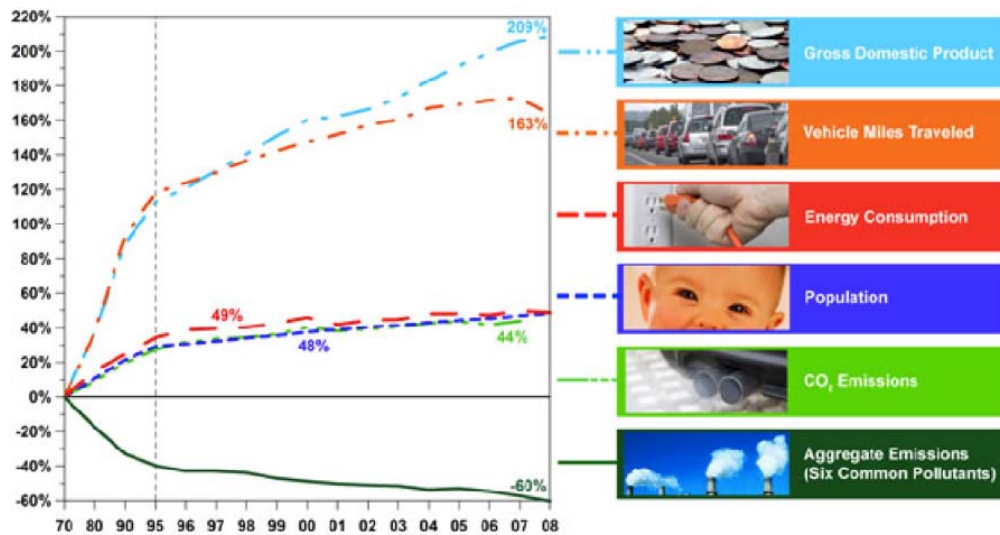
GDP, vehicle miles traveled, population, and energy consumption have all increased since 1990. But despite the fact that more people are using more energy to produce more goods and services, air pollution emissions have decreased.

EPA reports that air quality has improved for the [six main air pollutants](#):

Since 1990, nationwide air quality has improved significantly for the six common air pollutants. These six pollutants are ground-level ozone, particle pollution (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), lead, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), carbon monoxide (CO), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂). Nationally, air pollution was lower in 2008 than in 1990 for:

- 8-hour ozone, by 14 percent
- annual PM_{2.5} (since 2000), by 19 percent
- PM₁₀ , by 31 percent
- Lead, by 78 percent
- NO₂ , by 35 percent
- 8-hour CO, by 68 percent
- annual SO₂ , by 59 percent

The below graphic, from [EPA's website](#), (but not in the actual air trends report) shows air quality trends since 1970. These trends are even more dramatic than the 1990 to 2008 numbers.



The Bad News: the Press Does Not Seem Interested in Telling the American People Our Air Quality has Dramatically Increased

This is good news that air quality continues to improve and even more so because the American people do not know it. [According to a 2004 poll](#) from the Foundation for Clean Air Progress, only 29 percent of people thought that “America’s air quality is better than . . . it was in 1970.”

One reason that the American people do not know this is because the press does not report on it. So far not one major newspaper has written a story about the good news in this air trends report—there’s nothing from the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, or any of the other major news outlets. The only story we could find is from [E&E News](#) (a subscription-based environment and energy news service) and even then it was the 12th story in their afternoon publication.

It’s tough for the American people to lean to the truth about air quality when the media does not report the good news.

Our Air is Getting Cleaner

Today we can breathe easier knowing that our air is much cleaner than in the past. Even though the media is not reporting this good news to the American people, our air quality has substantially improved and will continue to improve. The data shows the truth.