CLIMATE ACTION TRACKER

USA

History: 2017 | 2016 | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | 2011

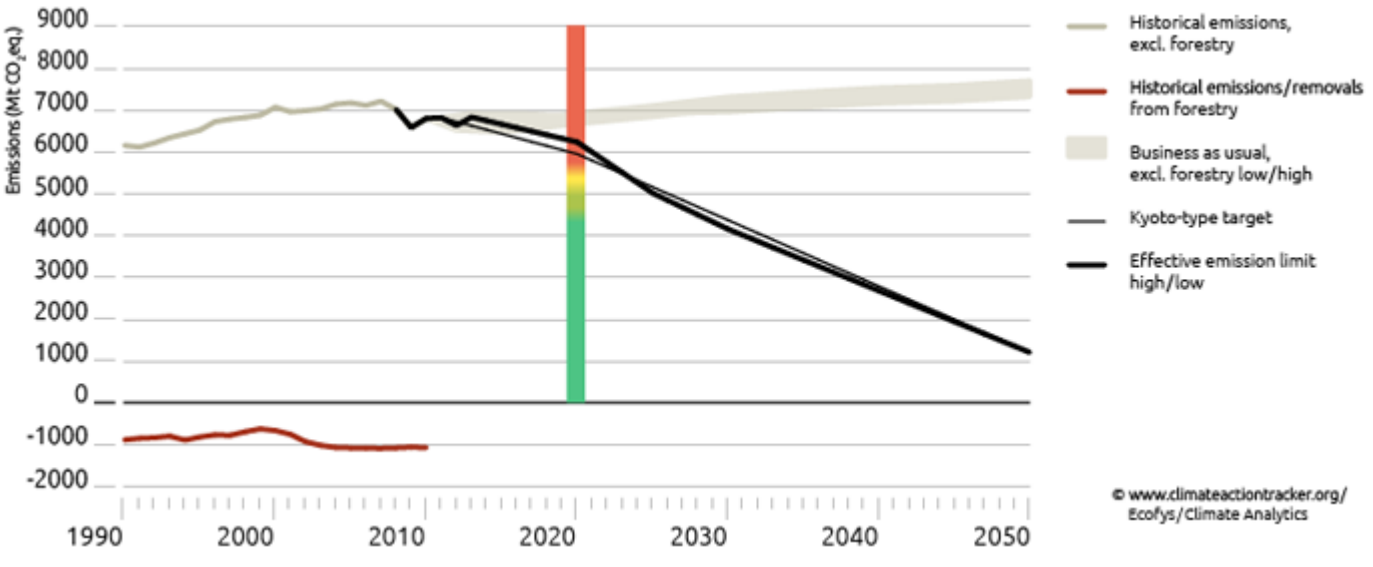
Page last updated: 25th June 2012

Rating



Assessment

USA's target to reduce emissions by -17% relative to 2005 emissions in 2020 (equivalent to -3% relative to 1990) is rated as Inadequate. At the UNFCCC workshop in April 2011, the USA reaffirmed the 17% reduction below 2005 in 2020 as an economy-wide target to be implemented through various national policy instruments. It stated that the target applies to all sectors according to the agreed IPCC guidelines for national greenhouse gas inventories. Forests will be accounted at the broadest possible scope.
There is significant uncertainty surrounding the consequence of this target for reductions in industrial GHG emissions (all emissions excluding LULUCF) due to uncertainties in the LULUCF emission estimate. If the estimate based on official data reported in 2009 is used, this target would likely translate to a +3% increase relative 1990 levels of industrial emissions, whereas the estimate based on data reported in 2010 would result in a likely -3% reduction from 1990 levels for industrial emissions. Estimates based on the newest data reported in 2011 indicate that the industrial emissions would be close to 1990 levels. The important issue is that these uncertainties arise from the same or very similar historical periods and differences are a result of technical revisions to data and methods. In addition, the USA mentioned that LULUCF adjustments may be made for natural disturbances and other factors, but details were left unclear.
A larger uncertainty relates to the policies for the national implementation of the target. While the Administration maintains a strong commitment to the goal, the legal and political processes at the national level are confronting its attempts to embed policies.



Description

The USA's Kyoto target was of -7% relative to 1990 emission levels for the first commitment period. In the Copenhagen Accord, the USA announced its -17% relative to 2005 levels which would have been in conformity with the anticipated U.S. energy and climate legislation. Legislation was put forward to the Senate in 2010 outlining an emission pathway below 2005 levels of -30% in 2025 and -42% in 2030 in line with the goal to reduce emissions by -83% relative to 2005 by 2050. Following the November 2010 elections and given the November 2012 presidential elections, it is very unlikely that comprehensive climate and energy legislation will be considered in the near future.

Status

Government announcement

Date of pledge: 25 November 2009

Source

USA's presentation at the UNFCCC workshop in Bangkok 4 April 2011

Pledge of the USA to the Copenhagen Accord

Assumptions

Targets for 2020 were calculated from the most recent national inventory submissions (2012).

The US have announced that they prefer a comprehensive, land-based approach that takes advantage of the broadest scope of mitigation actions. For the post 2012 period (2013-2020), LULUCF accounting was calculated on a land-based approach which assumes net-net accounting relative to 1990, using data from the national inventories (2012).

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