

You're going to be hearing a lot from certain quarters about EPA and what a terrible agency it is. Despite shortcomings in the statutes, repeated assaults on its budgets, and political harassment, the agency's accomplishments have been quite remarkable. As this chart shows, the volume of air pollutants has gone down very substantially in the past thirty years, even though everything else (population, energy use, GDP, etc.) has gone up:



Emissions DOWN, Everything Else UP

The decline is pretty remarkable. This translates directly into better air quality. For instance, here is a graph showing the decline of SO₂:



Carbon Monoxide Levels

Of course, there's plenty of room for debate about how we could improve our environmental regulations. But we shouldn't let that debate detract from EPA's enormous achievements.