Chemical Catalyst Collaborative Introductory Convening

Making Chemicals Safer for Health and Climate

June 24th, 2026 | 2:30 PM ET

Chemical Catalyst Collaborative

Housekeeping

We are recording this webinar and will be making it available to all registrants within a few business days.

We will also provide the slides to all registrants.

To ask a question for a speaker, please put submit it via the Q&A button at the bottom of your screen and we will get to it during our Q&A segment towards the end of the webinar.

You can upvote questions you think are particularly good and we will prioritize those.

You can talk with one another and network via the chat button at the bottom of your screen.

Agenda

01 Welcome & Housekeeping

02 Introducing the Collaborative

03 Speaker Presentations and Q&A

04 Polling & Feedback Opportunity

05 Wrap up & Staying engaged

Chemical Catalyst Collaborative

We are a partnership of five organizations committed to transforming the chemical manufacturing sector:

Our goal is to advance technical and policy solutions in the U.S. that reduce toxic pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the chemical manufacturing industry while preserving good jobs and advancing environmental justice.

This work is supported by the Global Industry Hub, Energy Foundation, and Blue Horizons Foundation.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the chemical industry

Protecting communities' health

Reducing climate pollution

Advancing environmental justice

Preserving good jobs

Our strategies

- Regional workshops and convenings – in person & virtual
- Technical resources and solutions – case studies and accounting methods for chemical hazards, greenhouse gas emissions, and environmental injustice
- Regional policy guidebooks (U.S. Gulf South)

We are working towards a detoxified and decarbonized chemical industrial sector – specifically looking at the value chains of PET and polyester fibers.

Let’s hear from some of the experts!

Introducing our Speakers

Archibald Fraser

Senior Research Analyst, Industry Program ACEEE

Dr. Beverly Wright

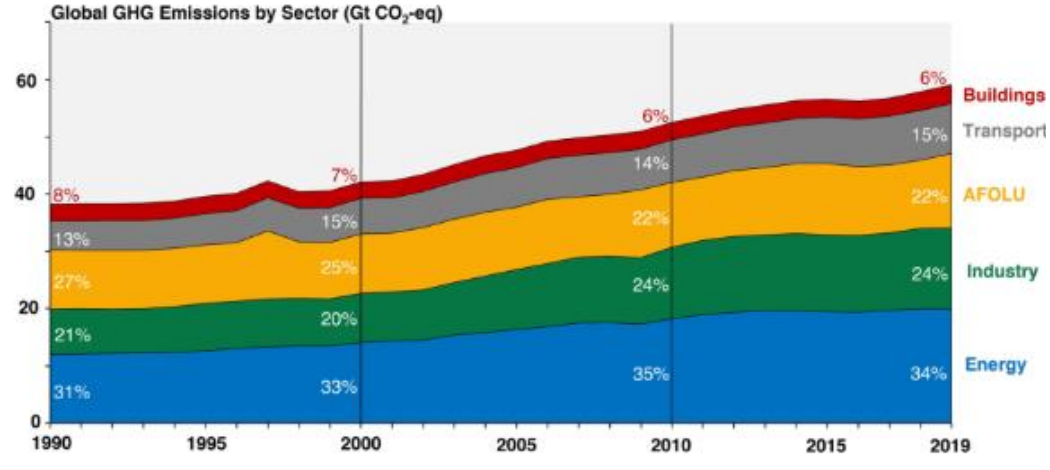
Founder and Executive Director, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (DSCEJ)

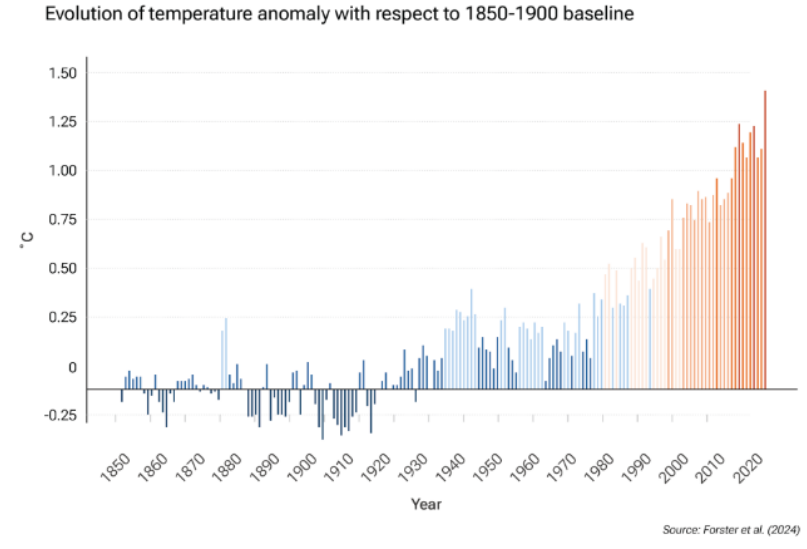
Dr. Leonardo Trasande

Jim G. Hendrick, M.D. Professor of Pediatrics, Department of Pediatrics Professor, Department of Population Health· NYU Grossman School of Medicine

Framing Petrochemicals and Climate

Globally, GHG emissions are still rising and driving climate change

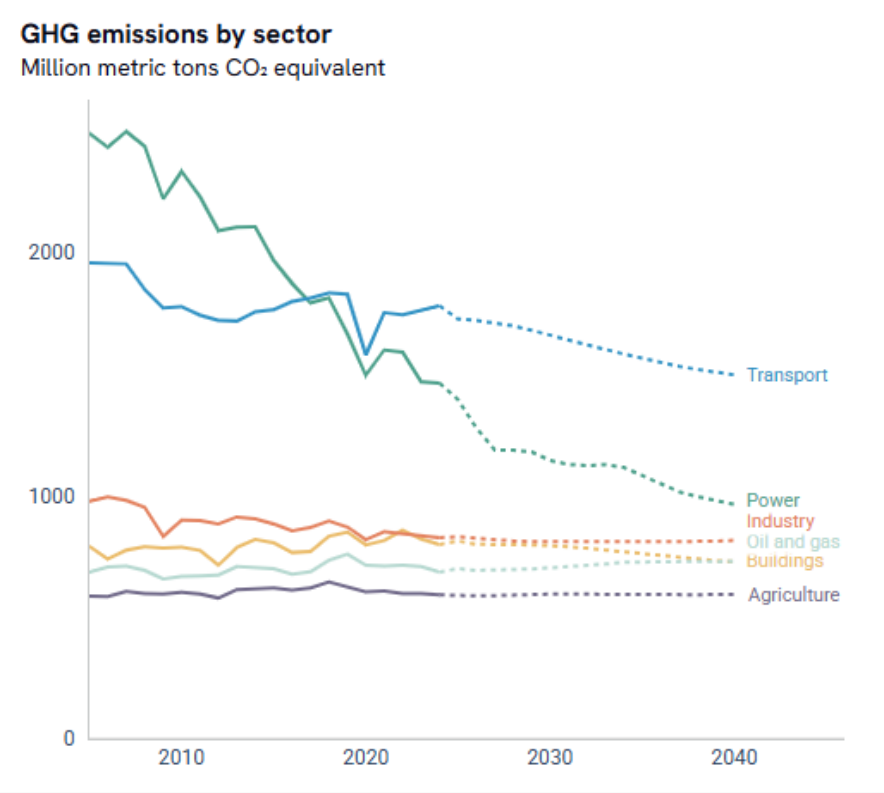


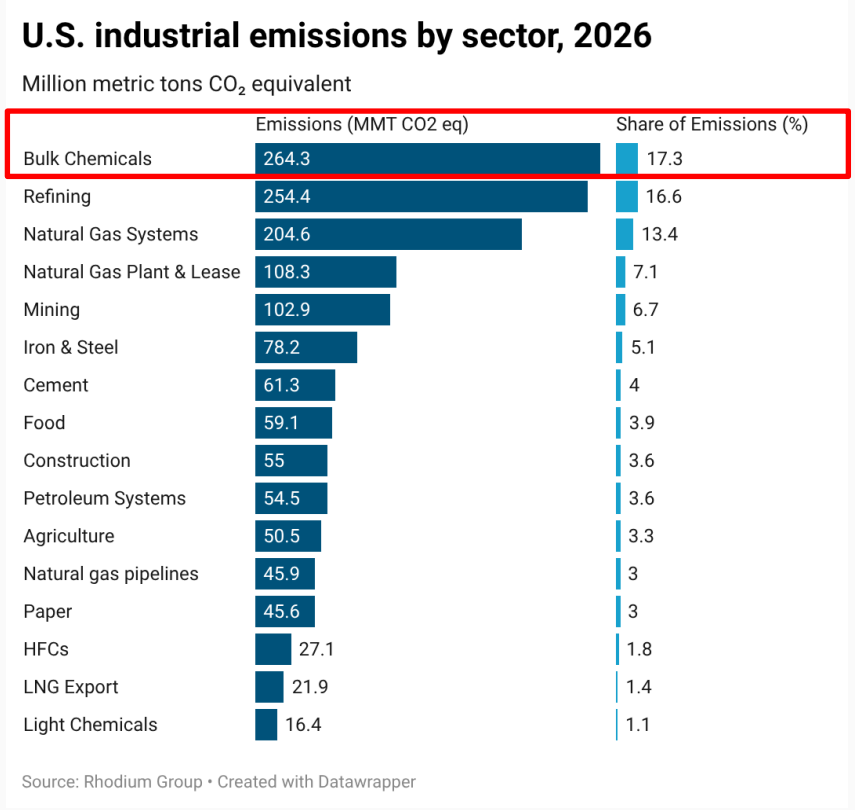


Source: Data from IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (2022); Based on global emissions from 2019

Source: UNEP, Seventh Edition of the Global Environment Outlook

In the U.S., petrochemicals are the largest source of industrial emissions

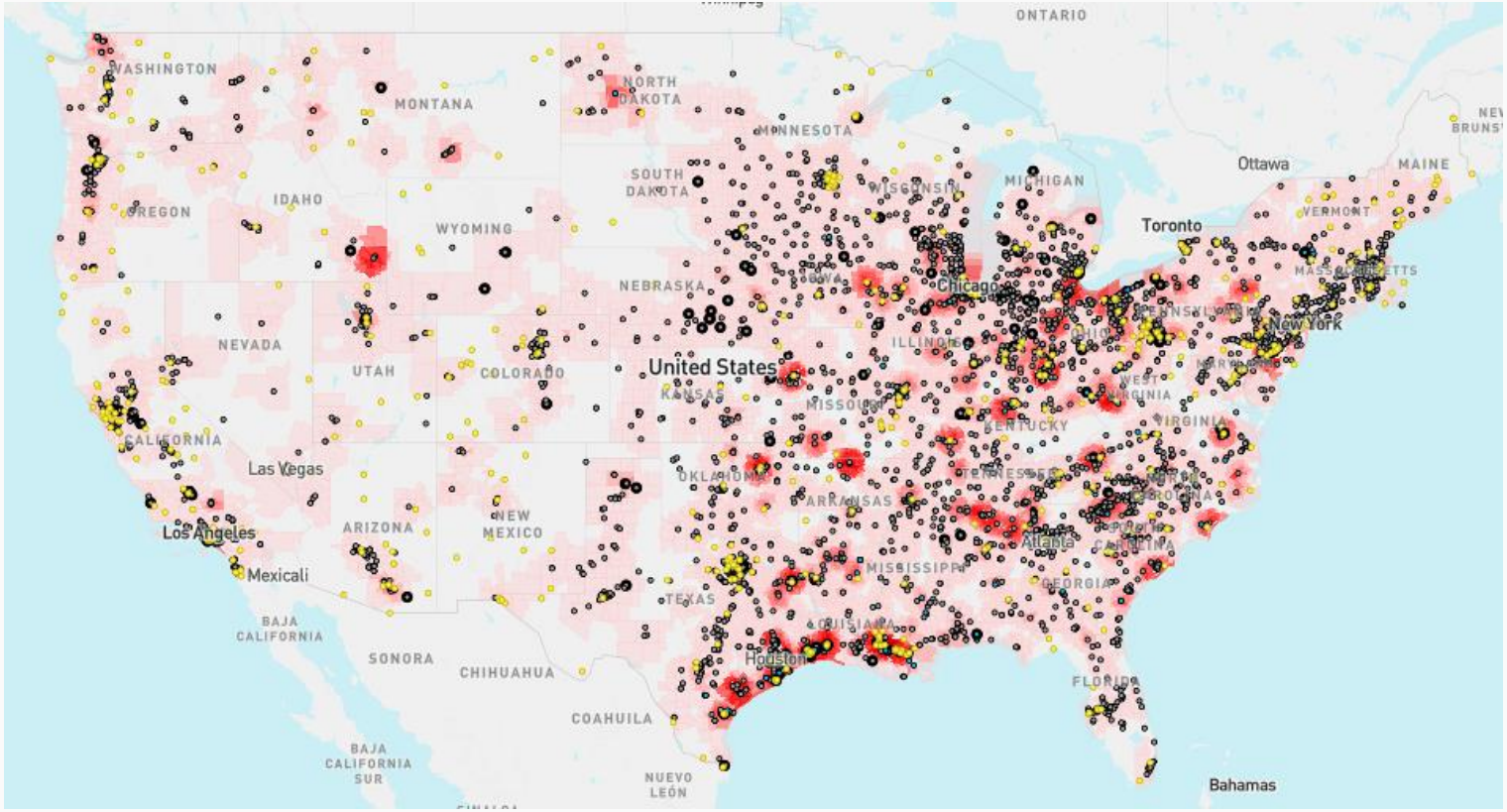


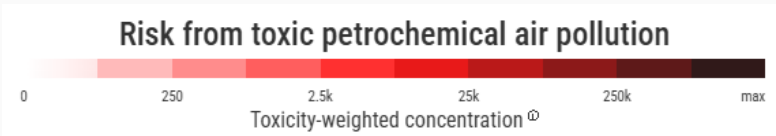


ACEEE

Source: Rhodium Group, Taking Stock 2025

… And also a major source of toxic air pollution





Source: Clear Collaborative Petrochemical Air Pollution Map

Most emissions concentrated in 8 bulk chemicals

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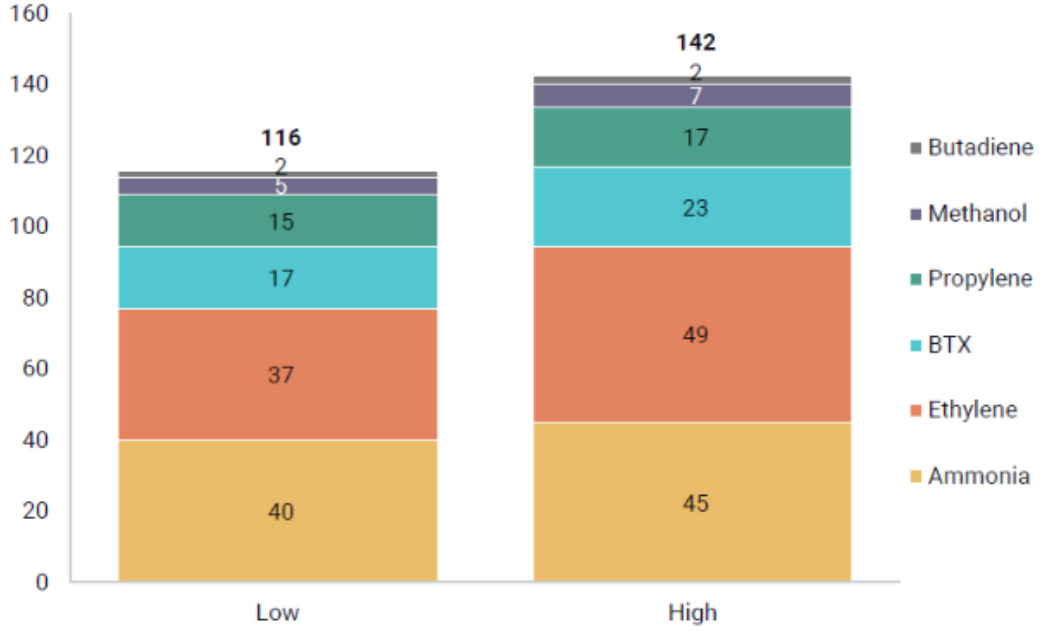
FIGURE 4

Total primary petrochemical emissions (upstream + production)

Million metric tons/year of CO_2e emissions, GWP100, under low and high scenarios



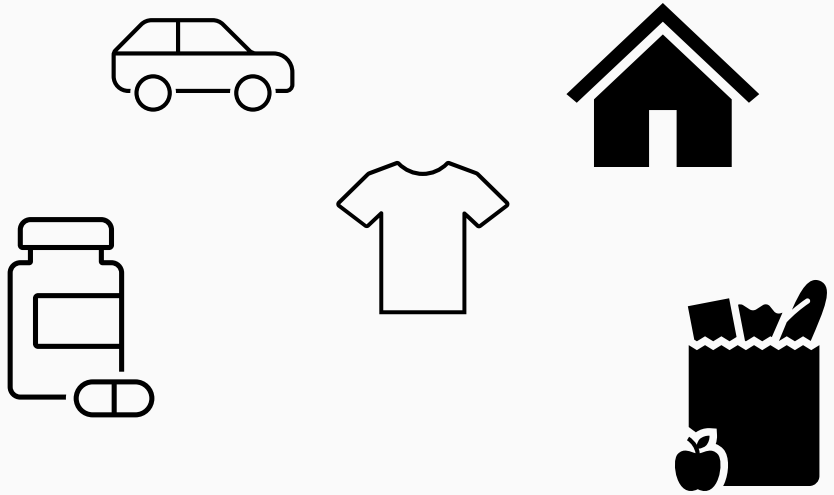
Source: Rhodium Group, Global Data.

Notes: BTX is a summation of the emissions from benzene, toluene, and xylenes.

Source: Rhodium Group

Petrochemicals are used in 95% of manufactured goods

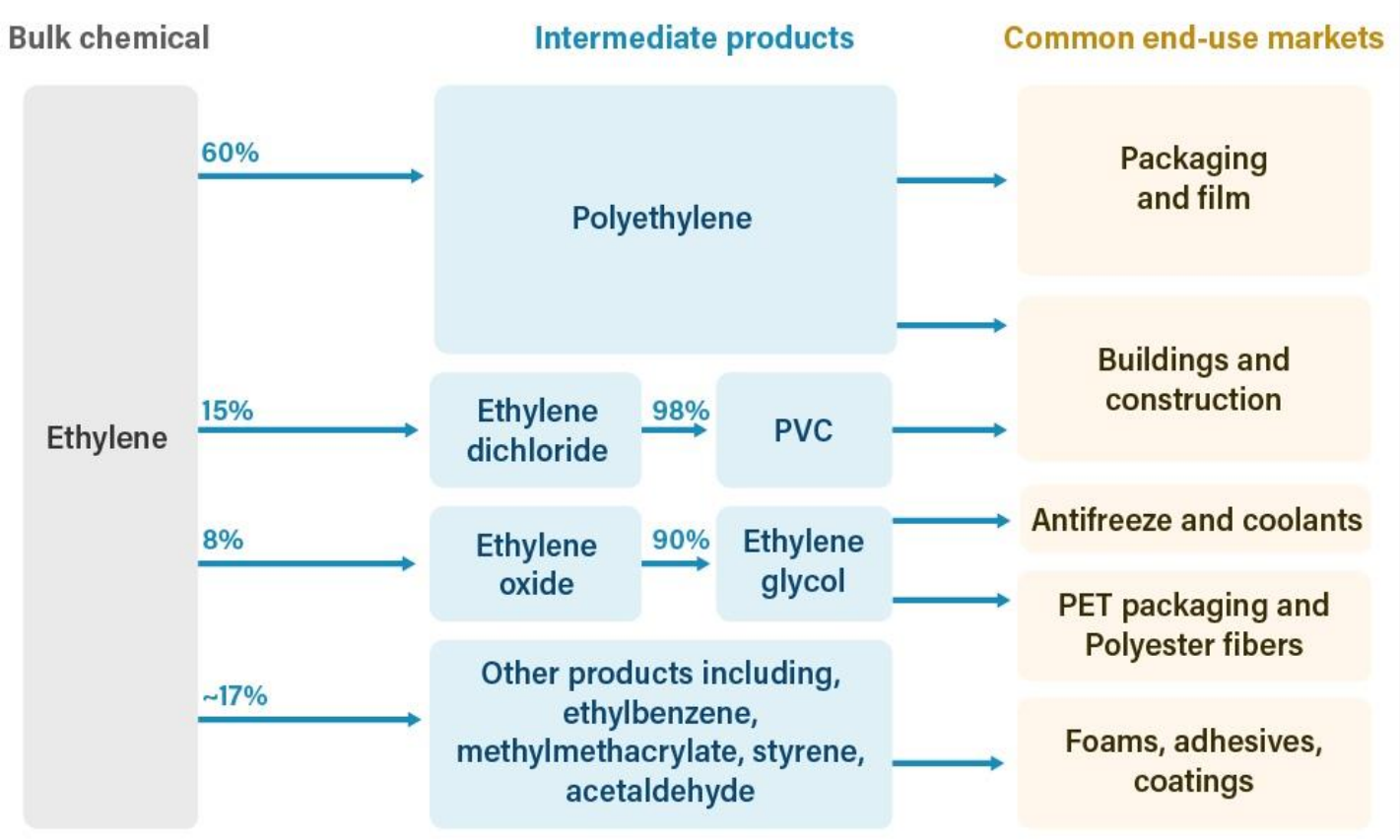
- Vehicles
- Food packaging
- Medicine
- Building materials
- Clothing



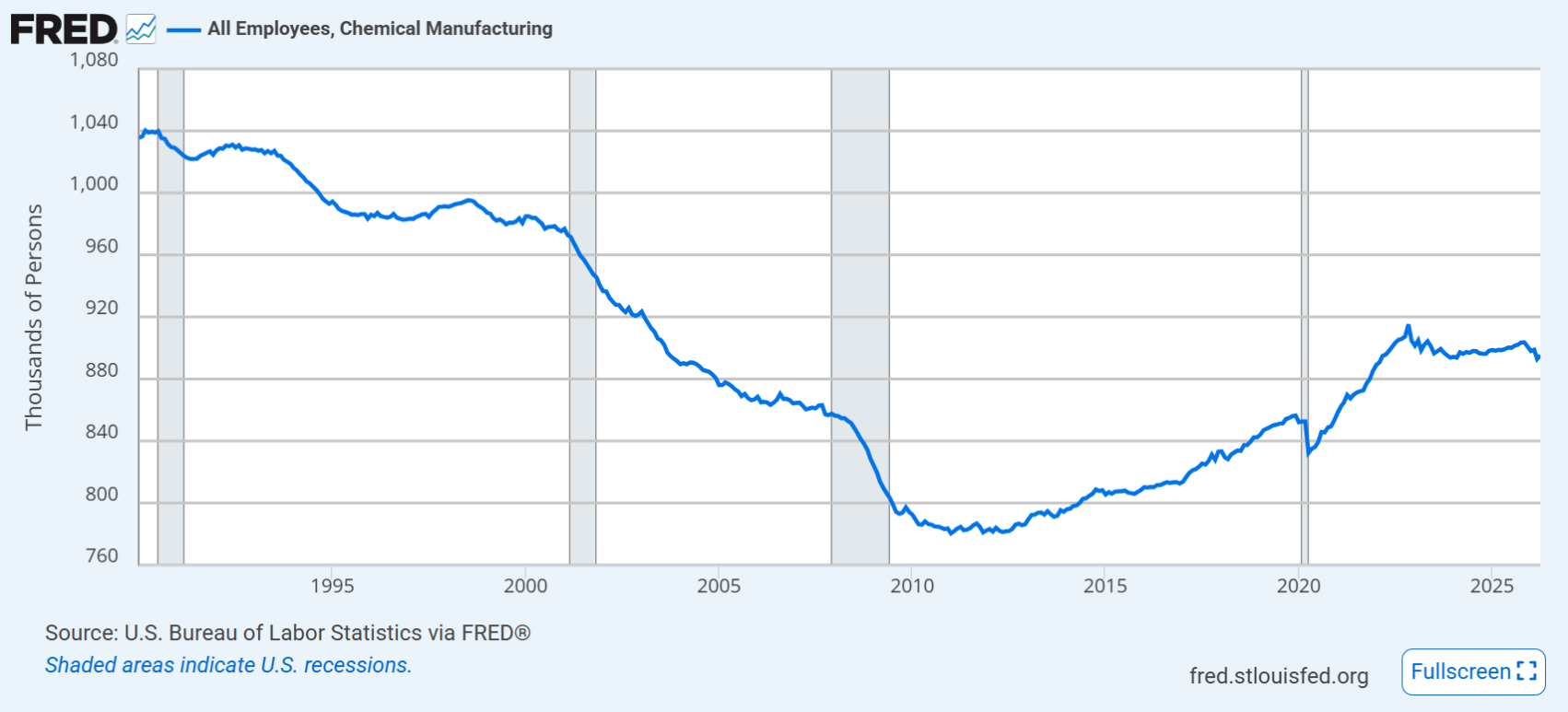
Including many climate solutions:

- Heat pumps
- Solar panels
- EV batteries

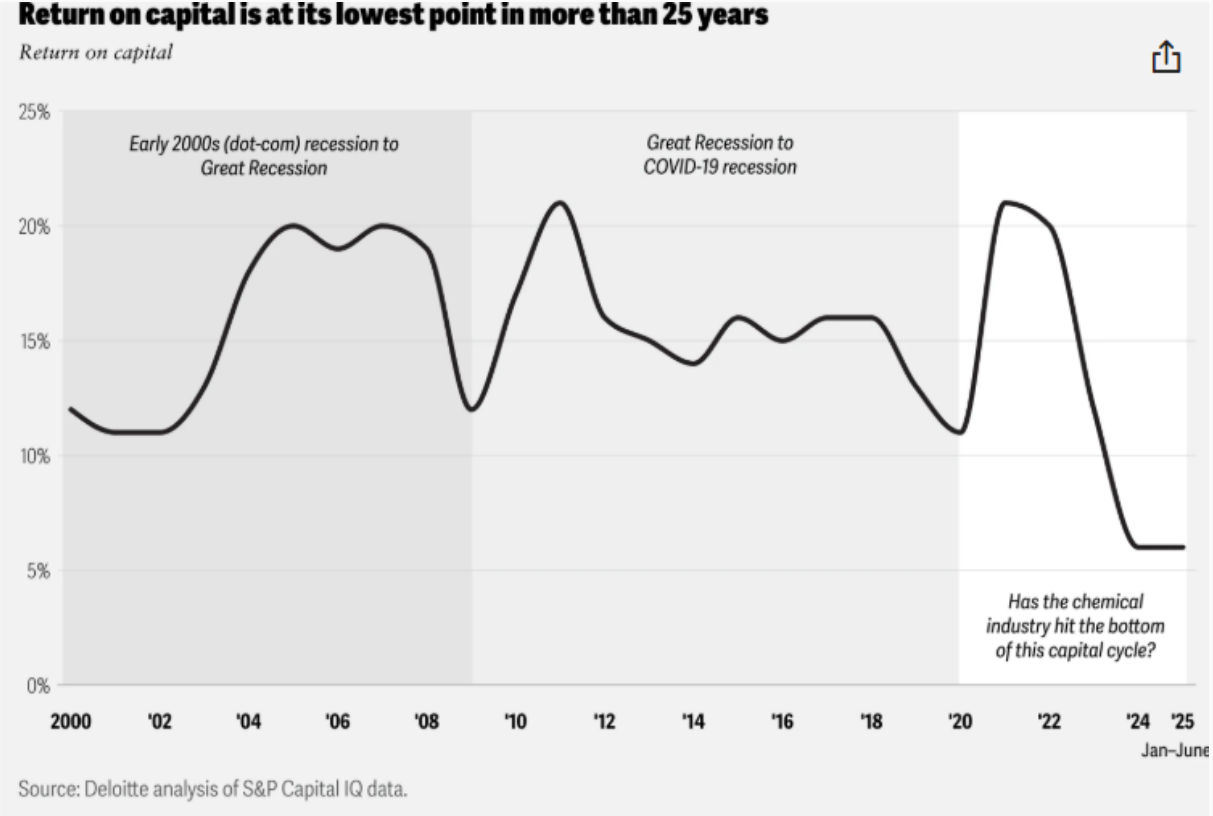
From bulk chemical to intermediates to consumer products



The chemical manufacturing industry employs a lot of people in the US



Investments can be challenging with prolonged industry downturn



Source: Deloitte 2026 Chemical Industry Outlook

Solutions exist – many can solve climate and health harms together

Demand reduction & substitution

Less virgin plastic and packaging; redesign and reuse.

Co-benefit: less waste & exposure

Electrification and alternative chemistry

Electrification and bio-routes (e.g. bio-MEG) cut combustion and certain toxic intermediates.

Co-benefit: cleaner local air

Efficiency & process heat

Decarbonizing process heat is the largest near-term emissions lever.

Co-benefit: lower energy cost

Thank you!

June 24, 2026

CHEMICAL CATALYST COLLABORATIVE

Cancer Alley: *Accountability, Alternatives, and the Future of Fenceline Communities*

Dr. Beverly L. Wright

Founder & Executive Director, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice
Co-Chair, National Black Environmental Justice Network

America's Wetlands...

- Due to its biological value to the nation, the **Mississippi River Corridor has been deemed *America's Wetlands***
- Once known as ***"Sportsman's Paradise,"*** 40 years of pollution have contributed to its decline

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Mississippi River Chemical Corridor

- An **85-mile tract** of land along the Mississippi River located between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- Lined with 200 petrochemical plants and 7 oil refineries

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`Chemical Corridor' By `Old Man River,' New Health Fear; [Home Edition]
J. MICHAEL KENNEDY. **Los Angeles Times (pre-1997 Full text)**. Los Angeles, Calif.: May 9, 1989. pg. 1

Cities along the MRCC

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Chemicals produced along the MRCC

Photo from *Kate Orff, "Ecological Atlas to 'Petrochemical America'" depicting the kinds of toxic emissions emanating from petrochemical plants along the MRCC.*
http://dabrownstein.wordpress.com/2013/12/04/mapping-the-cancer-corridor-along-louisianas-gulf-coast/

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Industry leaders call it the “Chemical Corridor”

- The MRCC produces approximately **1/4 of the nations petrochemicals**
- Responsible for turning small rural towns into urban communities of brick homes and shopping centers
- In other words, **prosperity.**

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Locals call it **"Cancer Alley"**

- Seeing themselves as a **vast human experiment**
- Blaming the millions of pounds of **toxic chemicals** pouring out of smoke stacks for:
  - **Miscarriages**
  - **Cancer**
  - **Respiratory ailments**
  - **Other serious diseases**

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I remember...

- Memories of the impact of my first encounters with the **suffering** of people in communities faced with environmental pollution are vivid even today
- Due to the lack of equal protection in the enforcement of environmental laws and regulations, **the most vulnerable communities suffered through the unchecked and continuous releases of toxic emissions** and the disproportionate effects of environmental harms

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One of my most haunting memories . . .

Empty slabs where houses used to be.

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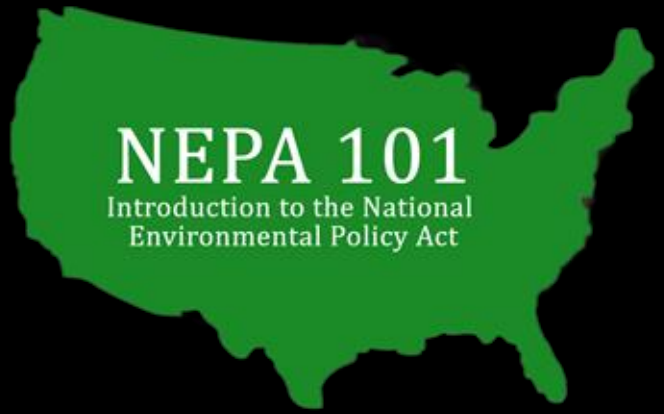
The Beginnings of the MRCC

In Louisiana, the petrochemical industry's growth began in the **1940s**.

Through **1970**, the industry experienced a period of unchecked industrial development.

In response to environmental degradation and negative impacts on public health, the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** was passed in **1969**.



The Beginnings of Environmental Consciousness

In **1970**, President Nixon served notice to American corporations:

> *"The time has come when we can wait no longer to repair the damage already done..."*

The **EPA** was authorized by Congress before the end of that year. The **Clean Air Act** was also passed in 1970, followed by the **Clean Water Act** in 1972.

55

YEARS LATER

It is hard to think of a place where the mission of environmental protection has ***failed more miserably*** *than in Louisiana's* ***Cancer Alley***.

Environmental Protection?

National environmental laws established a process-based regulatory system.

These laws:

- Did **NOT** ban pollution
- Did **NOT** set binding limits on discharge

Consequently, **Cancer Alley** continued to grow and flourish unchecked by an inadequate regulatory structure.

Economic Development vs. Human Health

- In Louisiana, facilities were **heavily recruited** by state and local governments as a means to stimulate economic development.
- Cooperative agreements supported the growth of the oil and gas industry, guaranteeing low taxes, low wages, a non-union labor force, and a lack of industry regulation.
- The MRCC flourished while communities were **placed at potential risk**.

The Mississippi River Chemical Corridor

Industry leaders call it the Chemical Corridor.

Responsible for turning small rural towns into brick homes and shopping centers.

In other words,

PROSPERITY.

The Mississippi River Industrial Corridor

Residents see themselves and their communities as a vast human experiment, blaming the millions of pounds of toxic chemicals pouring out of smoke stacks for:

- Miscarriages
- Cancer
- Respiratory Ailments
- Other Serious Diseases

Locals call it

"CANCER ALLEY."

Cancer Alley: Concerns of the Residents

People living closest to these plants in Cancer Alley wondered if their ***health*** was being compromised by the chemical emissions...

But they had **no way** of determining what was being released, or how much.

The LOUISIANA CONNECTION

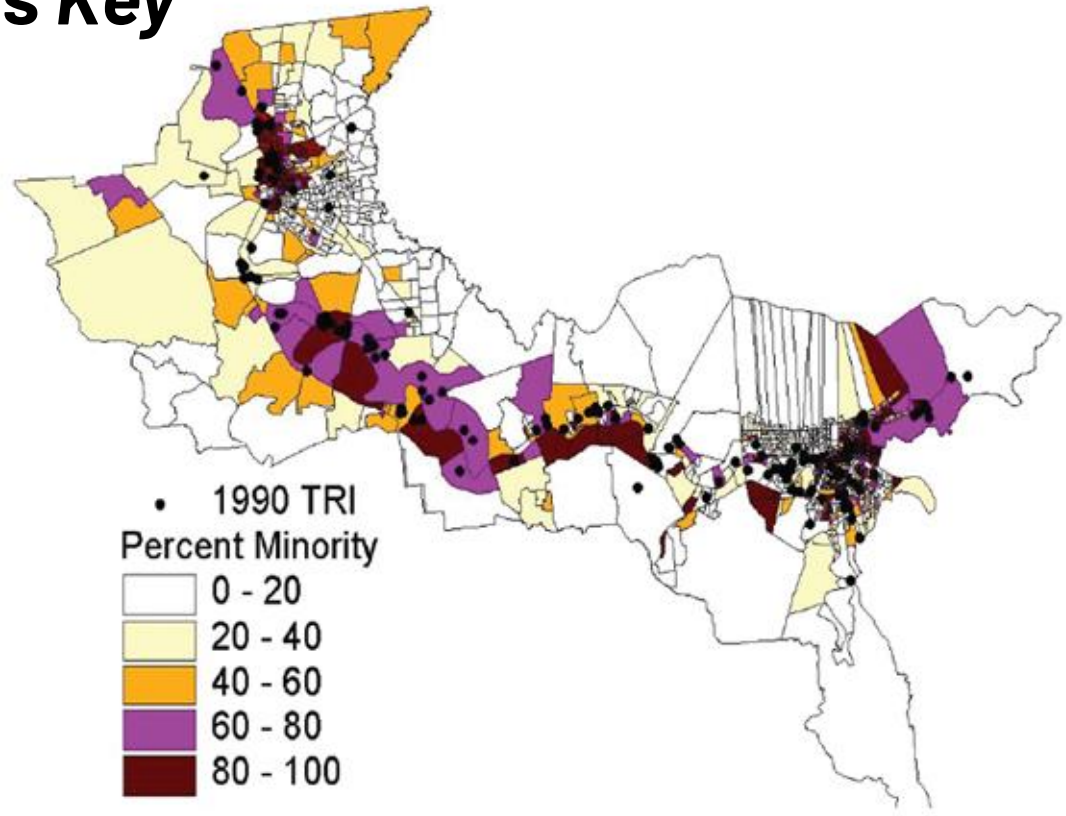
Using the Data

The use of **Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) data** has been a major building block in community efforts to achieve environmental justice.

> It has provided the scientific evidence for defining an ***environmental justice community,*** creating a basis for government action to protect the most vulnerable communities.

Step 1: **Awareness is *Key***

DSCEJ was first to use GIS Mapping to expose environmental racism.



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Proving What Communities Knew

Race Matters

80% of African Americans living in the Mississippi River Chemical Corridor **live within 5 kilometers or 3 miles of a polluting facility.**

Step 2: **Community Organizing**

Community Training

Grassroots Citizen Activism

Step 3: ***Enforcing*** **Chemical Regulations**

Communities across Louisiana have shown that ***informed, organized residents*** can influence permits, projects, and outcomes.

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Reimagining the Corridor

What needs to be true to ensure our safety moving forward?

RELOCATION

Residents and communities in fenceline proximity to petrochemical facilities receive viable, supported relocation pathways.

REDUCTION

Meaningful reduction in the concentration of industrial facilities along the Corridor.

Embracing Alternatives

Partial solutions exist; is industry willing to commit?

Reduce Process Dangers

Achievable Now

Lower the hazard potential of chemicals used in operations, substituting less toxic inputs where technically feasible.

Electrification

In Progress

Shift from fossil fuel-powered operations to cleaner energy sources. How facilities are powered determines baseline risk for surrounding communities.

Alternative Chemicals

Emerging Models

Ethanol, sugarcane derivatives, and plant-based replacements, including Styrofoam alternatives, show what is already possible.

Reimagining the Corridor

Thank you!

Stay in touch:

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Dr. Leonardo Trasande

Jim G. Hendrick, M.D. Professor of Pediatrics, Department of Pediatrics

Professor, Department of Population Health· NYU Grossman School of Medicine

Audience Q&A

How would you describe current chemical manufacturing processes in one word/phrase?

Chemical Catalyst Collaborative
Making Chemicals Safer for Health and Climate

Imagine the US chemical industry in 20 years (2046!): what is one major change that you hope to see?

Constant reductions in harm

More biological processes

Cleaner and resilient for Fenceline communities

Electrification

clean modular production

Clean and high-road

Very low GHG-emissions

60% reduction in toxic emissions

Imagine the US chemical industry in 20 years (2046!): what is one major change that you hope to see?

More distributed, less concentrated in Gulf Coast communities

Leader in developing and exporting 2nd gen technologies in safer and low-emissions chemicals

Defossilized and electried

intentionally designed for circularity and health

Holding companies responsible for their harms

Just and regenerative

All externalities included in decision-making

Development of safer substitutes linked to state and federal policies

Imagine the US chemical industry in 20 years (2046!): what is one major change that you hope to see?

Decrease unnecessary and toxic production

Inherent Hazard reduction and new platform chemicals. Roadmap away from Benzene and btex

Enoughness (no more constant growth)

Serious reduction/ bans in unnecessary, single use plastics.

Substantially defossilized and detoxified

Digestible information for all

Greater government support for R&D

Raise up startups that show safer chemicals are possible

What does a clean/safe green chemical sector look like?

Healthy for all

Distributed across the country

Smaller and distributed with community input from the beginning

More transparency in both production and end products

Verified no/low toxicity chemicals

Having a chemical plant next to you is like having a school or an office building

Accountability of chemical producers

Companies are accountable for the harms they create.

What does a clean/safe green chemical sector look like?

Serves demand only for essential functions of chemicals

Stringent toxic regulations, cleaner production

Safer substitutes that replace the most toxic, highest production volume chemicals.

The chemical footprint of products going all the way back to extraction of raw materials is well-documented, widely available and transparent

A sector where employees are all proud of their work

What is a key regional roadblock or “barrier to change” that this collaborative should engage with? e.g. state policy, making the business case, etc.

Durable demand/offtake

Bought elected officials

Clean energy is way more expensive than fossil fuel inputs to the chemical industry.

shortlist of chemical products which can multisolve for climate and toxicity

Educating the people to shape policy at local and state level

Regulatory capture

Lack of organized political power to take on this industry.

Highlight false solutions like bio based PVC

What is a key regional roadblock or “barrier to change” that this collaborative should engage with? e.g. state policy, making the business case, etc.

Voting rights

Incumbency bestows the power to obstruct progress.

Regional /local politics

Overcoming the advantages of the incumbent petrochemical industry

Data centers competing for electricity

Busting the economic myth that chemical industry promises

Funding support for scaling existing healthier products (e.g. linoleum flooring) and supporting safer material development and scaling

A robust communications strategy - to help make the issue salient regardless of the political orientation

What is a key regional roadblock or “barrier to change” that this collaborative should engage with? e.g. state policy, making the business case, etc.

Citizens United

What is one factor (e.g. regional/national policies, funding, global affairs...) that has been a major driver of progress in your work?

Staying Engaged

- Join our contact list to stay up to date
- Virtual workshops and webinars
- In person convening in the Gulf South
- Gulf South Community In-person workshops