

# The Unexpected Environmental Impact of Coronavirus

While much of the human population is inside quarantining, skies are clearing up, water is less polluted, and the Earth is making small recoveries from the damages caused as a result of day to day life. The COVID-19 pandemic could result in one of the greatest drops in carbon emissions in history. The last significant drop in global emissions was in 2009 after the recession and the last drop in emissions of this magnitude was seen at the end of World War 2.

*Four billion people worldwide are being told to shelter in their homes, the world economy has stalled, and scientists are anxiously awaiting what could be one of the largest drops in carbon emissions in history.*

*Coronavirus could cause the first big emissions drop in a decade*

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Some scientists say it's still too early to expect a significant change while others say we could see an emissions drop of more than 5%. Emissions from transportation make up around 14% of global emissions and in some states, city traffic has decreased by more than 30%. Additionally, air pollution in some of the countries' most polluted cities, Los Angeles and Seattle have seen a significant drop.

*The short-term implications are much easier to see. Many of the behaviors people have given up – like driving to work everyday or taking international flights – are extremely carbon intensive*

*The coronavirus is giving the environment a break – but*

*experts think it's unlikely to stay that way*

While the pandemic has some unforeseen environmental benefits, there are also many drawbacks. Due to the large quantities being used, masks and gloves that are not properly disposed of are washing up on ocean shores. Additionally, the EPA and the Trump Administration have made cutbacks to environmental regulations for the time being. Also, planes are still flying even when they're nearly empty.

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**Sources:**

- *Coronavirus could cause the first big emissions drop in a decade -Grist*
- *The coronavirus is giving the environment a break – but experts think it's unlikely to stay that way -Business Insider*