Environment

Note 1. Emissions of Carbon Dioxide and Other Greenhouse Gases. Greenhouse gases are those gases—such as water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride—that are transparent to solar (short-wave) radiation but opaque to long-wave (infrared) radiation, thus preventing long-wave radiant energy from leaving Earth's atmosphere. The net effect is a trapping of absorbed radiation and a tendency to warm the planet's surface.

Energy-related carbon dioxide emissions account for about 98 percent of U.S. CO_2 emissions. The vast majority of CO_2 emissions come from fossil fuel combustion, with smaller amounts from the nonfuel use of fossil fuels, as well as from electricity generation using geothermal energy and non-biomass waste. Other sources of CO_2 emissions include industrial processes, such as cement and limestone production. Data in the U.S. Energy Information Administration's (EIA) *Monthly Energy Review (MER)* Tables 12.1–12.6 are estimates for U.S. CO_2 emissions from energy consumption, including the nonfuel use of fossil fuels (excluded are estimates for CO_2 emissions from biomass energy consumption, which appear in Table 12.7).

For annual U.S. estimates for emissions of CO_2 from all sources, as well as for emissions of other greenhouse gases, see EIA's *Emissions of Greenhouse Gases Report* at http://www.eia.gov/environment/emissions/ghg_report/.

Note 2. Accounting for Carbon Dioxide Emissions From Biomass Energy Combustion. Carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from the combustion of biomass to produce energy are excluded from the energy-related CO_2 emissions reported in MER Tables 12.1–12.6, but appear in Table 12.7. According to current international convention (see the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's "2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories"), carbon released through biomass combustion is excluded from reported energy-related emissions. The release of carbon from biomass combustion is assumed to be balanced by the uptake of carbon when the feedstock is grown, resulting in zero net emissions over some period of time. (This is not to say that biomass energy is carbon-neutral. Energy inputs are required in order to grow, fertilize, and harvest the feedstock and to produce and process the biomass into fuels.)

However, analysts have debated whether increased use of biomass energy may result in a decline in terrestrial carbon stocks, leading to a net positive release of carbon rather than the zero net release assumed by its exclusion from reported energy-related emissions. For example, the clearing of forests for biofuel crops could result in an initial release of carbon that is not fully recaptured in subsequent use of the land for agriculture.

To reflect the potential net emissions, the international convention for greenhouse gas inventories is to report biomass emissions in the category "agriculture, forestry, and other land use," usually based on estimates of net changes in carbon stocks over time.

This indirect accounting of CO_2 emissions from biomass can potentially lead to confusion in accounting for and understanding the flow of CO_2 emissions within energy and non-energy systems. In recognition of this issue, reporting of CO_2 emissions from biomass combustion alongside other energy-related CO_2 emissions offers an alternative accounting treatment. It is important, however, to avoid misinterpreting emissions from fossil energy and biomass energy sources as necessarily additive. Instead, the combined total of direct CO_2 emissions from biomass and energy-related CO_2 emissions implicitly assumes that none of the carbon emitted was previously or subsequently reabsorbed in terrestrial sinks or that other emissions sources offset any such sequestration.

Section 12 Methodology and Sources

To estimate carbon dioxide emissions from energy consumption for the *Monthly Energy Review (MER)*, Tables 12.1–12.7, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) uses the following methodology and sources:

Step 1. Determine Fuel Consumption

Coal—Coal sectoral (residential, commercial, coke plants, other industrial, transportation, electric power) consumption data in thousand short tons are from MER Table 6.2. Coal sectoral consumption data are converted to trillion Btu by multiplying by the coal heat content factors in MER Table A5.

Coal Coke Net Imports—Coal coke net imports data in trillion Btu are derived from coal coke imports and exports data in MER Tables 1.4a and 1.4b.

Natural Gas (excluding supplemental gaseous fuels)—Natural gas sectoral consumption data in trillion Btu are from MER Tables 2.2–2.6.

Petroleum—Total and sectoral consumption (product supplied) data in thousand barrels per day for asphalt and road oil, aviation gasoline, distillate fuel oil, jet fuel, kerosene, liquefied petroleum gases (LPG), lubricants, motor gasoline, petroleum coke, and residual fuel oil are from MER Tables 3.5 and 3.7a–3.7c. For the component products of LPG (ethane/ethylene, propane/propylene, normal butane/butylene, and isobutane/isobutylene) and "other petroleum" (aviation gasoline blending components, crude oil, motor gasoline blending components, naphthas for petrochemical feedstock use, other oils for petrochemical feedstock use, pentanes plus, special naphthas, still gas, unfinished oils, waxes, and miscellaneous petroleum products), consumption (product supplied) data in thousand barrels per day are from EIA's *Petroleum Supply Annual* (*PSA*), *Petroleum Supply Monthly* (*PSM*), and earlier

publications (see sources for MER Table 3.5). Petroleum consumption data by product are converted to trillion Btu by multiplying by the petroleum heat content factors in MER Table A1 (Table A3 for motor gasoline).

Biomass—Sectoral consumption data in trillion Btu for wood, biomass waste, fuel ethanol (minus denaturant), and biodiesel are from MER Tables 10.2a–10.2c.

Step 2. Remove Biofuels From Petroleum

Distillate Fuel Oil—Beginning in 2009, the distillate fuel oil data (for total and transportation sector) in Step 1 include biodiesel, a non-fossil renewable fuel. To remove the biodiesel portion from distillate fuel oil, data in thousand barrels per day for refinery and blender net inputs of renewable diesel fuel (from the PSA/PSM) are converted to trillion Btu by multiplying by the biodiesel heat content factor in MER Table A3, and then subtracted from the distillate fuel oil consumption values.

Motor Gasoline—Beginning in 1993, the motor gasoline data (for total, commercial sector, industrial sector, and transportation sector) in Step 1 include fuel ethanol, a non-fossil renewable fuel. To remove the fuel ethanol portion from motor gasoline, data in trillion Btu for fuel ethanol consumption (from MER Tables 10.2a, 10.2b, and 10.3) are subtracted from the motor gasoline consumption values. (Note that about 2 percent of fuel ethanol is fossil-based petroleum denaturant, to make the fuel ethanol undrinkable. For 1993–2008, petroleum denaturant is double counted in the PSA product supplied statistics, in both the original product category—e.g., pentanes plus—and also in the finished motor gasoline category; for this time period for MER Section 12, petroleum denaturant is removed along with the fuel ethanol from motor gasoline, but left in the original product. Beginning in 2009, petroleum denaturant is counted only in the PSA/PSM product supplied statistics for motor gasoline; for this time period for MER Section 12, petroleum denaturant is left in motor gasoline.)

Step 3. Remove Carbon Sequestered by Nonfuel Use

The following fuels have industrial nonfuel uses as chemical feedstocks and other products: coal, natural gas, asphalt and road oil, distillate fuel oil, liquefied petroleum gases (ethane/ethylene, propane/propylene, normal butane/butylene, and isobutane/isobutylene), lubricants (which have industrial and transportation nonfuel uses), naphthas for petrochemical feedstock use, other oils for petrochemical feedstock use, pentanes plus, petroleum coke, residual fuel oil, special naphthas, still gas, waxes, and miscellaneous petroleum products. In the nonfuel use of these fuels, some of the carbon is sequestered, and is thus subtracted from the fuel consumption values in Steps 1 and 2.

Estimates of annual nonfuel use and associated carbon sequestration are developed by EIA using the methodology detailed in "Documentation for *Emissions of Greenhouse Gases in the United States 2008*" at http://www.eia.gov/oiaf/1605/ggrpt/documentation/pdf/0638(2006).pdf.

To obtain monthly estimates of nonfuel use and associated carbon sequestration, monthly patterns for industrial consumption and product supplied data series are used. For coal nonfuel use, the monthly pattern for coke plants coal consumption from MER Table 6.2 is used. For natural gas, the monthly pattern for other industrial non-CHP natural gas consumption from MER Table 4.3 is used. For distillate fuel oil, petroleum coke, and residual fuel oil, the monthly patterns for industrial consumption from MER Table 3.7b are used. For the other petroleum products, the monthly patterns for product supplied from the PSA and PSM are used.

Step 4. Determine Carbon Dioxide Emissions From Energy Consumption

Carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions data in million metric tons are calculated by multiplying consumption values in trillion Btu from Steps 1 and 2 (minus the carbon sequestered in nonfuel use in Step 3) by the CO_2 emissions factors at http://www.eia.gov/oiaf/1605/ggrpt/excel/CO2_coeffs_09_v2.xls. Beginning in 2010, the 2009 factors are used.

Coal—CO_2 emissions for coal are calculated for each sector (residential, commercial, coke plants, other industrial, transportation, electric power). Total coal emissions are the sum of the sectoral coal emissions.

Coal Coke Net Imports—CO_2 emissions for coal coke net imports are calculated.

Natural Gas—CO_2 emissions for natural gas are calculated for each sector (residential, commercial, industrial, transportation, electric power). Total natural gas emissions are the sum of the sectoral natural gas emissions.

Petroleum—CO_2 emissions are calculated for each petroleum product. Total petroleum emissions are the sum of the product emissions. Total LPG emissions are the sum of the emissions for the component products (ethane/ethylene, propane/propylene, normal butane/butylene, and isobutane/isobutylene); residential, commercial, and transportation sector LPG emissions are estimated by multiplying consumption values in trillion Btu from MER Tables 3.8a and 3.8c by the propane emissions factor; industrial sector LPG emissions are estimated as total LPG emissions minus emissions by the other sectors.

Geothermal and Non-Biomass Waste—Annual CO_2 emissions data for geothermal and non-biomass waste are EIA estimates based on Form EIA-923, "Power Plant Operations Report" (and predecessor forms). Monthly estimates are created by dividing the annual data by the number of days in the year and then multiplying by the number of days in the month. (Annual estimates for the current year are set equal to those of the previous year.)

Biomass—CO_2 emissions for wood, biomass waste, fuel ethanol (minus denaturant), and biodiesel are calculated for each sector. Total emissions for each biomass fuel are the sum of the sectoral emissions. The following factors, in million metric tons CO_2 per quadrillion Btu, are used: wood —93.80; biomass waste—90.70; fuel ethanol—68.44; and biodiesel—73.84. For 1973–1988, the biomass portion of waste in MER Tables 10.2a–10.2c is estimated as 67 percent; for 1989–2000, the biomass portion of waste is estimated as 67 percent in 1989 to 58 percent in 2000, based on the biogenic shares of total municipal solid waste shown in EIA's "Methodolology for Allocating Municipal Solid Waste to Biogenic and Non-Biogenic Energy," Table 1 at http://www.eia.gov/cneaf/solar.renewables/page/mswaste/msw.pdf.

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