

# AHRI: Leading the **Safe Transition** to **Low-GWP** **Refrigerants**



Left: AHRI promotes passage of the AIM Act on Capitol Hill. Right: AHRI Vice President of Regulatory Affairs Helen Walter-Terrinoni leads the Safe Refrigerant Transition Task Force.

## Critical Partnerships

AHRI Vice President of Regulatory Affairs Helen Walter-Terrinoni leads the AHRI Safe Refrigerant Transition Task Force (SRTTF), established in 2019 to support supply chain readiness for the transition to low-GWP refrigerants. The Task Force comprises more than 200 members and stakeholders from over 75 organizations including contractors, government agencies, the fire service, unions, training organizations, environmental groups, and other entities.

To date, the SRTTF has led several in-person and online educational sessions on regulation compliance, safety standards and codes, and refrigerant research, all of which are of critical importance to stakeholders. The popular AHRI Refrigerant Webinar Series is set to occur monthly this year.

"The Task Force seeks to provide the latest and most accurate information available on low-GWP refrigerants to all stakeholders," said Walter-Terrinoni. "We pride ourselves on connecting the experts behind the research with our stakeholders to ensure a safe refrigerant transition," she continued.

More about AHRI's efforts regarding the safe refrigerant transition, including volunteer opportunities, resources and factsheets, presentations and webinars, and relevant articles, is available at <http://ahrinet.org/saferefrigerant>.

## Legislative Success

The Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI) continues to demonstrate its commitment to ensuring a safe transition to low-global warming potential (GWP) refrigerants. In December 2020, the AHRI-supported American Innovation and Manufacturing Act (AIM Act), that gives the Environmental Protection Agency express authority to phase down hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) production and consumption, was signed into law as part of an omnibus/COVID-19 relief package.

Passage of the AIM Act was a major legislative win for the heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and refrigeration (HVACR) industry, and the most significant climate legislation in over a decade. While HFCs were developed as alternatives to substances that deplete the stratospheric ozone layer, they are potent, high-GWP greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. The AIM Act authorizes the EPA to regulate a group of about 20 HFCs, which are widely used as refrigerants, solvents, fire suppressants, foam blowing agents, aerosols, propellants, and in other applications. The bill regulates HFCs in three ways:

- 1.** It gradually phases down the production and consumption of HFCs over a 15-year period via an allowance allocation program.
- 2.** It authorizes the EPA to establish standards for the management of HFCs used as refrigerants, such as in equipment servicing and repair, and for the recovery of "used" HFCs for purification and resale, known as reclaim.
- 3.** It authorizes the EPA to establish sector-based use restrictions, to facilitate transitions to next-generation refrigerant technologies.

It is important to note that the AIM Act does not prohibit the use of HFCs in existing refrigeration and air conditioning equipment.

