

The National Grocers Association (NGA) represents 21,000 independent community grocers and wholesalers across the United States. Independent community grocers account for 33 percent of all grocery sales, exceeding \$250 billion, and more than 1 million American jobs.

What are the EPA Refrigerant Rules?

The passage of the American Innovation and Manufacturing (AIM) Act of 2020 means grocers will soon face a major transition in its refrigeration infrastructure as the US's production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) will be phased down by 85% over the next 15 years.

Grocers will need to transition to a new refrigeration infrastructure and switch to low global warming potential (GWP) refrigerant systems to meet the new rule, like CO₂. As of right now, the EPA's compliance date for commercial use is January 1, 2026. This is a nearly impossible target not just for independent grocers, but for the entire retail grocery industry.

The Challenges

- ◆ Our partners on the issue estimate that switching to new refrigerants would:
 - Cost retailer supermarkets \$1.5 million per store to implement.
 - Increase energy usage as much as 40% a year per store.
 - Equate to an annual food loss of \$500,000 per store because the refrigeration systems available under the rule have significant downtime and no backup capability.
- ◆ Low GWP refrigerants have not reached a high enough production level for prices to become reasonable.
- ◆ There is a lack of technicians qualified to work on these new systems, further complicating both installation and maintenance.

The Ask

- ◆ NGA is advocating for the EPA to reconsider its current approach on AIM Act compliance and to consider the unintended consequences of their rulemaking.
- ◆ At the very least, NGA needs EPA to push back the compliance date until 2036 to allow for production to reach an adequate level, for more technicians to be trained to maintain and install the new systems, and for grocers to plan for the massive financial implications of changing their refrigeration systems.

At the HEART of the community.

