

Airplane Pollution Stoppable



Airplane pollution deaths still represent a small share of the toll from all kinds of air pollution. Emissions from ships, for instance, kill an estimated 60,000 people a year, according to a 2007 study also published in *Environmental Science & Technology*.

And the annual total death toll from air pollution is about a million, according to the United Nations Environment Programme.

However, Barrett said, "aviation is growing fast, so we need to start now" on curbing the death rate. "Regulators need to explicitly consider the impact of cruise emissions on human health," he added.

Sulfur in jet fuel is a major killer, but for a small additional cost "on the order of [U.S.] five cents a gallon, you can remove the vast majority of the sulfur," he said.

Junfeng Liu, an atmospheric chemist at Princeton University, said the "excellent" study delves into "an important global environmental policy issue."

Airplane-pollution deaths account for about a tenth of all air-pollution deaths with cross-border causes, Liu said. So airplane pollution could be an important focus for environmental regulations in the future.

Indeed the findings may someday influence U.S. policy, according to Lourdes Maurice, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration's chief scientific and technical adviser for environment.

If the findings hold up during future studies, then the aviation agency will consider how to regulate airplane emissions to cut their health impact, Maurice said.