FACT SHEET: SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS

SUSTAINABILITY OPPORTUNITY

In addition to conducting an annual, third-party verified greenhouse gas emissions inventory for Scope 1 and 2 emissions, Stanford University also tracks Scope 3 emissions. Scope 3 emissions are indirect emissions from sources that occur as a result of an institution’s operations, but are from sources not owned or controlled by the institution. There are a total of 15 categories of Scope 3 emissions, and Stanford annually tracks two of those categories: commuter emissions and business air travel emissions.

Commuter Emissions Tracking

Stanford’s Transportation Services team tracks driving commuter emissions based on data from the annual Stanford Commute Survey. The data is parsed in many ways to help guide future programs. At Stanford, about 47% of employees use alternative transportation options to get to work. For any mode of transit that involves vehicle emissions, Stanford captures the mode of transit (drive alone, carpool and vanpool) in order to apply accurate emissions calculations to the type of commute. To have further insight into the emissions data, commuter affiliation is tracked by categories such as graduate students, undergraduate students, and university employees.

Business Air Travel Emissions Tracking

Metrics for business air travel emissions for the entire university are captured through procurement data, which is then processed by the Transportation Services team. Emissions included in this category cover all employee air travel funded by Stanford and are based on the departure and arrival cities for each trip.

Emissions Trends

Scope 3 emissions fluctuate year to year based on both employee behavior and slight changes in data collection methods to improve accuracy. Overall, commuter emissions have remained fairly consistent since 2010, while business air travel emissions have increased slightly. The primary reason commuter emissions have remained steady is because of Stanford’s robust transportation demand management programs that incentivize commuters to avoid driving alone to campus. For business air travel, Stanford also has measures in place to reduce potential emissions. For example, Stanford’s Travel management team offers carbon reporting to staff to help them consider how to reduce flight emissions and offset them.

MORE INFORMATION

SUSTAINABLE STANFORD
https://sustainable.stanford.edu/transportation

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