

PRESS RELEASE  
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# CLEARPATH

## NEW REPORT: Removing Government Roadblocks can Pave the Way for Low-Carbon Cement, Concrete & Asphalt

*ClearPath report analyzes challenges to achieve low-carbon cement, concrete, and asphalt and makes suggestions to accelerate innovations*

**Washington, DC – Tuesday, February 20, 2024** – ClearPath released a report, written in partnership with the Clean Air Task Force (CATF) and the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES), analyzing the challenges and solutions to lower carbon dioxide emissions from the cement, concrete and asphalt industries using innovation. Read the latest ClearPath report, [\*Paving the Way to Innovation: Moving from Prescriptive to Performance Specifications to Unlock Low-Carbon Cement, Concrete, and Asphalt Innovations.\*](#)

“Emissions from America’s industrial sector are actually neck and neck with the power sector, and it’s likely that industrial emissions will remain higher than power emissions going forward,” **said Jeremy Harrell, Chief Strategy Officer, ClearPath.** “The good news is the existing cement, concrete and asphalt companies as well as the innovators in the space are all working on low-carbon solutions. The problem is actually that federal, state and local regulatory structures need to be modernized.”

The U.S. is leading the world in the development of innovative low-carbon cement, concrete, and asphalt materials and practices. However, increasing the commercialization and adoption of innovative low-carbon concrete and asphalt mixes and established low-carbon replacements like supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs) and recycled asphalt pavement (RAP) in the public sector faces a key barrier: overly prescriptive specifications which limit producer flexibility to use advanced, low-carbon cement, concrete and asphalt.

“The concrete and asphalt sectors, each representing large shares of global emissions, are fundamental building blocks of modern life. Yet, as global commodities, they can only decarbonize as quickly as standard specifications allow. This report’s analysis of current state specifications highlights the potential to accelerate innovation in these sectors, by focusing on performance-based standards.” – **Brad Townsend, Vice President of Policy and Outreach, Center for Climate and Energy Solutions.**

“The U.S. needs to reduce emissions from heavy industry to achieve national and global climate goals, and there are significant opportunities to do so by tackling emissions from cement, concrete, and asphalt,” **said Emily Tucker, U.S. Senior Federal Policy Manager at Clean Air Task Force.** “Moving toward performance-based specifications for these products would open the door for innovation and could ultimately lead to even greater emissions reductions in this sector.”

Updating prescriptive specifications towards performance specifications in the U.S. has the potential to unlock massive emissions reductions and materials savings for both producers and American taxpayers. Widespread adoption of RAP can avoid 140,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually, the equivalent of 30,500 cars being taken off the road in one year, while increasing SCM usage in concrete reduces emissions by up to 70%.

Four key takeaways from this report include:

- U.S. cement and concrete specifications heavily favor prescriptive specifications – every state has at least one type of restriction across the end-uses analyzed, while at least 48 states have some form of prescriptive specifications for asphalt. These specifications block market access and commercialization opportunities for low-carbon materials.
- The construction industry workforce needs adequate workforce development through collaboration between federal agencies, universities, and industry research centers in order to adopt performance specifications at speed and scale. The workforce needs comprehensive retraining to create trust within the industry that performance specifications can be used safely.
- Federal investment in basic R&D for novel materials, specification development and certified testing laboratories is essential to streamline specification development and enhance the industry’s trust in adopting performance specifications.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation can incentivize performance specification adoption among state DOTs through voluntary incentives and demonstration programs that reduce the cost and risk of trying novel, low-carbon materials. The federal government can play a role in accelerating innovation by streamlining regulations.

[Executive Summary](#)

[Full Report](#)

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## **ABOUT CLEARPATH**

ClearPath 501(c)(3) was established by businessman Jay Faison in 2014. ClearPath's mission is to develop and advance policies that accelerate breakthrough innovations that reduce emissions in the energy and industrial sectors. To advance that mission, we develop cutting-edge policy solutions on clean energy and industrial innovation. An entrepreneurial, strategic nonprofit, ClearPath 501(c)(3) collaborates with public and private sector stakeholders on innovations in nuclear energy, carbon capture, hydropower, natural gas, geothermal, energy storage, and heavy industry to enable private-sector deployment of critical technologies. Learn more at [clearpath.org](http://clearpath.org). Follow us on Twitter: [@powellrich](https://twitter.com/powellrich), [@ClearPathAction](https://twitter.com/ClearPathAction)