

background concentration (level) (in atmospheric chemistry)

The concentration of a given species in a pristine air mass in which anthropogenic impurities of a relatively short lifetime are not present. The background concentrations of relatively long-lived molecules, methane, carbon dioxide, halocarbons (CF₃Cl, CF₂Cl₂, etc.) and some other species continue to rise due to anthropogenic input, so the composition of background air is undergoing continual change. Background concentration of a given species is sometimes considered to be the concentration of that impurity in a given air mass when the contribution from anthropogenic sources under study is absent.

Synonymous with baseline concentration.

1990, 62, 2175