



CLIMATE CHANGE

OVERVIEW, IMPACTS, AND SOLUTIONS

SNAPSHOT: THE EPA'S CLEAN POWER PLAN

- ▶ Sets the nation's first federal limits on carbon pollution from existing power plants.
- ▶ Establishes state-based pollution reduction targets that collectively add up to a 30% reduction in power plant carbon pollution by 2030.
- ▶ The EPA based state targets on reductions that are achievable using four pollution reduction tools, or "building blocks."
 1. Modernizing existing coal plants.
 2. Increasing the use of existing natural gas power plants.
 3. Increasing renewable energy and other zero-carbon emitting power sources.
 4. Making our homes and businesses more energy efficient.
- ▶ Timeline:
 - 120 day public comment period & four public hearings in late July.
 - June, 2015: EPA finalizes the Clean Power Plan.
 - June, 2016: State implementation plans due to the EPA.

Climate Change is Impacting Communities Today — We Have a Moral Obligation to Act to Protect Future Generations

Addressing climate change is the League of Conservation Voters' top priority. As the National Climate Assessment made all too clear, climate change is already impacting communities across our country. Impacts include extreme weather events like prolonged heat waves, more heavy downpours, and more severe droughts, as well as an extended season of wildfires. Climate and weather-related disasters including superstorm Sandy cost the economy more than \$100 billion in 2012.¹ Climate change also threatens our health—warmer temperatures increase smog and lead to increases in asthma attacks and other respiratory ailments, which are especially dangerous to children and the elderly.²

Strong and Diverse Support for Taking Action to Limit Dangerous Carbon Pollution

There is strong support for the EPA setting standards to reduce carbon pollution. Companies from Dell to Goldman Sachs to Walmart are concerned about the impact of global warming on their businesses and see business opportunities in reducing carbon pollution.³ The military is sounding the alarm about climate change driving conflicts over food and water, and causing widespread displacement around the globe.⁴ Faith leaders like the US Conference on Catholic Bishops support reducing carbon pollution in order to protect vulnerable populations from climate change's impacts and act as responsible stewards of the earth.⁵ Public support is strong; according

to a June 2014 Washington Post/ABC poll 70 percent of people surveyed believe the federal government should reduce carbon pollution from power plants.⁶

We already have limits in place for other pollutants like mercury and arsenic, and it is common sense to do the same for carbon pollution.

The EPA's Clean Power Plan is a Critical Opportunity to Reduce Carbon Pollution, Protect Our Health, and Create Jobs

On June 2, 2014, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) unveiled its Clean Power Plan, the first-ever national limits on carbon pollution from existing power plants. Power plants are the single largest source of carbon pollution in the U.S., responsible for approximately 40% of the pollution driving climate change.⁷ This critical step builds on steps the administration has taken to nearly double the fuel efficiency of cars, which will also significantly reduce carbon pollution and draft standards setting the first federal carbon pollution limits for new power plants.

The Clean Power Plan sets state carbon intensity targets that collectively add up to a 30% reduction in power plant carbon pollution by 2030 and provides a flexible framework that allows states to craft the solutions that work best for them. It gives states the flexibility to meet this goal by making existing coal plants more efficient, increasing the use of natural gas power plants, expanding renewable energy sources like wind and solar, and reducing electricity demand by making our homes and businesses more efficient.





The Clean Power Plan is the biggest step the U.S. has ever taken to address climate change and LCV strongly opposes any attempt by Congress to block, delay or weaken it.

The Benefits of the Clean Power Plan

The EPA estimates that we will see up to \$93 billion in health and climate benefits per year under the Clean Power Plan.⁸ The benefits result from preventing thousands of premature deaths, and hospital visits, more than a hundred thousand asthma attacks in children, and hundreds of thousands of missed days at school and work. In addition to reducing carbon pollution, the proposed plan would cut hundreds of thousands of tons of other harmful pollution, including fine particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide.

The EPA estimates that under the Clean Power Plan we can cut electric bills by roughly 9 percent in 2030 and create tens of thousands of jobs by cleaning up the electric power system and making our homes and businesses more efficient. We also have real life examples to show that tackling carbon pollution is boosting the economy. The northeastern states already taking action against carbon pollution through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative have injected more than \$1.6 billion into the regional economy⁹ and saved consumers \$1.1 billion on their electric bills in just the first three years alone.¹⁰

ENDNOTES

- 1 The Executive Office of the President, "The President's Climate Action Plan", June 2013
- 2 U.S. Global Change Research Program, "2014 National Climate Assessment", May 2014
- 3 "Reducing Risk and Driving Business Value." CDP Supply Chain Report 2012-13, June 2014
- 4 Davenport, Coral. "Climate Change Deemed Growing Security Threat by Military Researchers." *The New York Times* May 13, 2014
- 5 U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, "U.S. Bishops Urge Action on Carbon Pollution to Stem Climate Change." May 29, 2014
- 6 Clement, Scott. "A huge majority of Americans support regulating carbon from power plants." *The Washington Post*, June 2, 2014
- 7 Utech, Dan. "By the Numbers: The EPA's Proposed New Carbon Pollution Standards for Power Plants." The White House Blog, June 2, 2014
- 8 EPA Fact Sheet: "By the Numbers: Cutting Carbon Pollution from Power Plants." June 2014
- 9 Potomac Economics, "Annual Report on the Market for RGGI CO2 Allowances: 2013." May 2014
- 10 Analysis Group, "The Economic Impacts of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative on Ten Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States." November 2011