



To: Interested Parties  
From: Jeff Gohringer, League of Conservation Voters  
Re: The Facts on EPA and Climate Change That Polluters Hope You Ignore  
Date: May 30, 2014

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The politics of energy and climate change are shifting rapidly. But corporate polluters and their allies in Washington are already attacking the EPA's safeguards limiting carbon pollution from power plants, using the same playbook that's failed over and over again across the country. Voters of both parties, across key voting blocks, want to see limits on carbon pollution, and trust the EPA over Congress on the issue - facts that corporate polluters and their allies in Congress don't like and are hoping you ignore.

Power plants are our nation's biggest individual source of carbon pollution, responsible for 40 percent of these emissions that fuel climate change. Although we already have safeguards in place for pollutants like arsenic, mercury and lead, power plants today are allowed to spew unlimited amounts of carbon pollution into our air. This pollution is changing our climate in ways that harm public health, worsening air quality -- which triggers more asthma attacks and aggravates respiratory diseases -- and leading to more [extreme weather](#) like powerful storms, large wildfires, and damaging floods. Implementing the first-ever federal limits on carbon pollution will be our biggest step yet to tackle this challenge -- and will even help [cut](#) emissions of mercury and other dangerously toxic pollution in the process.

These safeguards are so common sense that many Americans believe they're already in place. In fact, a solid [majority](#) support the EPA setting standards to limit carbon pollution from power plants, and overwhelmingly trust the EPA - not Congress -- to decide on carbon pollution safeguards. These safeguards [are popular](#) in swing states like Michigan, Virginia and North Carolina, and even across more conservative states Mitt Romney won last cycle, including Georgia, Louisiana and Montana.

Support for action on climate change is particularly high among younger voters. Nationwide [bipartisan polling](#) of voters under 35 has found that young Republicans and Democrats alike are concerned about climate change and support federal action to address it by a wide margin. They also describe climate change deniers as "ignorant" and "out-of-touch," and reject the false choice between economic growth and action on climate change.

Previous [polling](#) has also found that additional key groups of voters, including Latinos, are also deeply concerned about climate change. That's why attacking the EPA isn't just bad policy, it's bad politics.

We saw this over and over again last cycle. Environmental champions like Angus King in Maine, Martin Heinrich in New Mexico, Chris Murphy in Connecticut and Tammy Baldwin in Wisconsin all won big. In fact, despite record spending by corporate polluters attacking candidates on energy issues, not a single Senator who supported action on climate change lost their race. Not in Ohio, Pennsylvania, or Montana. And President Obama was re-elected by a wide margin.

In Virginia alone, millions of dollars was spent attacking Tim Kaine on energy issues, accusing him of supporting policies that would cripple the state's coal industry and force electricity prices to rise. Sound familiar? They're using the same attacks today, and they're just [as false](#) today as they were when they failed back then.

And they failed again last year. Ken Cuccinelli made defending the coal industry and attacking the EPA central parts of his campaign for Governor of Virginia, running ads attacking Terry McAuliffe for supporting Pres. Obama's supposed "war on coal." McAuliffe fought back, defended the EPA and supported these safeguards. The result? McAuliffe won the race in a state where the coal industry has traditionally shaped the political landscape, and was the most [trusted](#) candidate on energy and environmental issues.

Voters of [both parties](#) know that climate change is happening, and [support the EPA](#) taking action to address it. They know we have a moral obligation to act on climate change and protect our planet for future generations. Supporting these safeguards is good politics and good policy. The only question for leaders in Washington is whose side they're on -- do they stand with corporate polluters or with the American people?