EPA's CLEAN POWER PLAN, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDERS

Carbon pollution threatens the health of Americans and our environment. We are already seeing an increase in temperatures, extreme weather events, drought, flooding, and sea level rise in areas across the United States, and these impacts are expected to get worse as carbon pollution in our atmosphere increases. On August 3, 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as part of President Obama's Climate Action Plan, finalized a historic plan to cut carbon pollution from power plants—the largest source of carbon pollution in the United States. EPA's Clean Power Plan will maintain an affordable, reliable energy system, while cutting pollution and protecting public health and the environment now and for future generations.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON ASIAN AMERICANS & PACIFIC ISLANDERS

Climate change poses serious threats to Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in the United States.

The U.S. Pacific Islands region includes more than 2,000 islands spanning millions of square miles of ocean, which will be impacted by climate change. Rising air and ocean temperatures, shifting rainfall patterns, changing frequencies and intensities of storms and drought, decreasing stream flows, rising sea levels, and changing ocean chemistry will threaten the sustainability of globally important and diverse ecosystems as well as local communities, livelihoods, and cultures. Increasingly constrained freshwater supplies, coupled with increased temperatures, stress both people and ecosystems and decrease food and water security. [U.S. Global Change Research Program, National Climate Assessment, 2014].

Asian Americans and Hispanics in 2006 to 2008 had the greatest percentage of populations residing in counties where air quality did not meet EPA standards for particulate matter and ozone, compared with other populations. Rising temperatures are expected to increase ozone formation in many densely-populated areas, and increases in the frequency and intensity of wildfires can contribute to particulate pollution. This air pollution is associated with diminished lung function, increased hospital admissions, increased hospital room visits for asthma, and increases in premature deaths. [CDC, Asian Americans Populations Report; National Climate Assessment, 2014]

Vulnerable communities. Carbon pollution threatens the health, economic well-being and quality of life of Americans across the country, and especially most vulnerable among us – including children, older adults, people with heart or lung disease and people living in poverty. Heat waves, air quality, and extreme weather are all climate change related issues that disproportionately affect minority and low income communities. We are already seeing an increase in temperatures, extreme weather events, drought, flooding, and sea level rise in areas across the United States, and these impacts are expected to get worse as carbon pollution in our atmosphere increases.

The Clean Power Plan and related actions will provide broad benefits to communities– particularly vulnerable communities – across the nation by reducing carbon pollution from power plants. It will cut hundreds of millions of tons of carbon pollution and hundreds of thousands of tons of harmful soot- and smog-forming particle pollution that makes people sick.

THE CLEAN POWER PLAN: SIGNIFICANT CLIMATE AND PUBLIC HEALTH BENEFITS

The Clean Power Plan achieves significant reductions in carbon pollution from power plants while advancing clean energy innovation, development and deployment. It follows on and will help advance current trends in the power sector towards increased use of low- and no-carbon electricity generation and greater use of energy efficiency, in ways that will preserve affordability for consumers and continues U.S. leadership in addressing climate change. States and businesses have already charted a course toward cleaner, more efficient power, and the Clean Power Plan builds on their progress.

The transition to clean energy is happening faster than anticipated. This means carbon and air pollution are already decreasing, improving public health each and every year. The Clean Power Plan accelerates this momentum, putting us on pace to cut this dangerous pollution to historically low levels in the future. When the Clean Power Plan is fully in place in 2030, carbon pollution from the power sector will be 32 percent below 2005 levels, securing progress and making sure it continues.

The transition to cleaner sources of energy will better protect Americans from other harmful air pollution, too. By 2030, emissions of SO2 from power plants will be 90 percent lower compared to 2005 levels, and emissions of NOx will be 72 percent lower. Because these pollutants can create dangerous soot and smog, the historically low levels mean we will avoid thousands of premature deaths and have thousands fewer asthma attacks and hospitalizations in 2030 and every year beyond.

Within this larger context, the CPP itself is projected to contribute significant pollution reductions, resulting in important benefits.

The Clean Power Plan will:

- Cut hundreds of millions of tons of carbon pollution and hundreds of thousands of tons of harmful soot- and smog-forming particle pollution that makes people sick. Together these reductions will result in significant near-term public health benefits, especially for the most vulnerable citizens.
    - From the soot and smog reductions alone, for every dollar invested through the Clean Power Plan—American families will see up to $4 in health benefits in 2030.
    - The Clean Power Plan will significantly improve health by avoiding each year:
        - 3,600 premature deaths
        - 1,700 heart attacks
        - 90,000 asthma attacks
        - 300,000 missed workdays and schooldays
- Put our nation on track to cut carbon pollution from the power sector by 32 percent by 2030 while maintaining electric system reliability and affordable electricity.
    - In addition to helping make our electric system cleaner, the Clean Power Plan will make electricity more affordable in the long run. EPA's analysis of impacts on electricity bills shows that Americans are expected to save over $80 annually on their utility bills by 2030.
- Reduce CO_2 emissions from power plants—an essential step towards reducing the impacts of climate change and providing a more certain future for our environment, our health and future generations.
    - By acting on climate now, we are fulfilling a moral obligation to our children and grandchildren to leave them with a healthier, more stable planet.
- Change the international dynamic and leverage international action. Climate change is a global challenge and requires global action. When the U.S. leads, other nations follow.

HELPING COMMUNITIES BENEFIT FROM CLEAN ENERGY

The Clean Power Plan gives states the opportunity to ensure that communities share in the benefits of a clean energy economy, including energy efficiency and renewable energy. EPA is creating a Clean Energy Incentive Program (CEIP) to reward early investments in wind and solar generation, as well as demand-side energy efficiency programs implemented in low-income communities that deliver results during 2020 and/or 2021. Through this program, EPA intends to make allowances or emission rate credits (ERCs) available to states that incentivize these investments. EPA is providing additional incentives to encourage energy efficiency investments in low-income communities.

EPA also will provide communities and states information on how to access existing financial and technical assistance programs that can help communities increase use of energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. These include federal programs and resources, such as: the National Community Solar Partnership to increase access to solar for all Americans, particularly low- and moderate- income communities; and the Clean Energy Impact Investment Center,

which the Department of Energy will launch to make information about energy and climate programs at DOE and other government agencies accessible and more understandable to the public. In addition, the Administration's POWER+ Plan will invest in workers and jobs, address important legacy costs in coal country and drive the development of coal technology as our country moves to a clean energy economy.

ASSESSING LOCAL IMPACTS

The Clean Power Plan includes information on communities living near power plants, and EPA will provide additional information to facilitate engagement between communities and states as implementation of the Plan moves forward. For example, the agency will provide guidance on strategies states can use to meaningfully engage with communities, along with other resources and information, on a portal web page the agency will develop for communities' use.

EPA's Clean Power Plan Communities Portal hosts EPA's local analyses as well as tools and information that can inform state analyses: www2.epa.gov/cleanpowerplan/clean-power-plan-toolbox-communities.

GET INVOLVED

Public engagement was essential throughout the development of the Clean Power Plan, and EPA will continue to engage with communities and the public during the rule's implementation. The EPA will also be conducting a robust outreach effort for communities throughout the comment period for the proposed federal plan.

To ensure opportunities for communities to continue to participate in decision making, EPA will be providing training and resources throughout the implementation process. EPA is also requiring that states demonstrate how they are actively engaging with communities in the formulation of state plans developed for the Clean Power Plan. To learn more, please visit the Clean Power Plan Portal for Communities at www2.epa.gov/cleanpowerplan/clean-power-plan-toolbox-communities.

LEARN MORE

For more information on the Clean Power Plan, visit www.epa.gov/cleanpowerplan.

For tips on how you can reduce your carbon footprint, visit www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/.

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