

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



BENEFITS OF A CLEANER, MORE EFFICIENT POWER SECTOR

On August 3, President Obama and the EPA announced the Clean Power Plan – a historic and important step in reducing carbon pollution from power plants that takes real action on climate change. Shaped by years of unprecedented outreach and public engagement, the final Clean Power Plan is fair, flexible and designed to strengthen the fast-growing trend toward cleaner and lower-polluting American energy. With strong but achievable standards for power plants, and customized goals for states to cut the carbon pollution that is driving climate change, the Clean Power Plan provides national consistency, accountability and a level playing field while reflecting each state’s energy mix. It also shows the world that the United States is committed to leading global efforts to address climate change.

- Carbon pollution threatens the American public because it leads to damaging and long-lasting changes in our climate that can have a range of severe negative effects on public health and the environment.
- Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the more prevalent greenhouse gas pollutant, accounting for nearly three-quarters of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and 82 percent of total U.S. GHG emissions.
- Power plants are the largest source of CO₂ emissions, contributing 31 percent of U.S. GHG emissions.

HEALTH AND CLIMATE BENEFITS

- Our most vulnerable citizens, including children, older adults, people with heart or lung disease and people living in poverty are most at risk to the health impacts of climate change.
- The transition to cleaner sources of energy, which is already underway, will better protect Americans from other harmful air pollution, too.
 - By 2030, emissions of sulfur dioxide from power plants will be 90 percent lower compared to 2005 levels.

- Emissions of nitrogen oxides 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 Clean Power Plan itself is projected to contribute significant pollution reductions, resulting in important benefits, including:
 - Climate benefits of \$20 billion
 - Health benefits of \$14-\$34 billion
 - Net benefits of \$26-\$45 billion
- Because carbon pollution comes packaged with other dangerous air pollutants, the Clean Power Plan will also protect public health, avoiding each year:
 - 3,600 premature deaths
 - 1,700 heart attacks
 - 90,000 asthma attacks
 - 300,000 missed workdays and schooldays
- From these reductions alone, for every dollar invested through the Clean Power Plan, American families will see up to \$4 in health benefits.

BENEFITS OF CLEAN ENERGY INVESTMENTS

- The Clean Power Plan doesn't reinvent the wheel – it builds on the progress states, cities and businesses have been making for years.
- While preserving a diverse energy mix, the Clean Power Plan spurs increased investment in clean, renewable energy and cuts carbon emissions by about 870 million tons by 2030 – 32 percent below 2005 levels.
 - Roughly equal to emissions associated with annual electricity use in all U.S. residences.
- Investments in renewable technologies are paying off.
 - The U.S. uses three times more wind energy than it did in 2009.
 - In 2014, the U.S. brought online as much solar energy every three weeks as it did in all of 2008.

- These investments have already added jobs in the solar industry 10 times faster than the rest of the economy, with one job added every 20 minutes. And jobs that increase the energy efficiency of homes, buildings and equipment are projected to rise.

BENEFITS TO RATEPAYERS

- Faced with unchecked climate change, the U.S. is expected to incur significant costs to prepare for and respond to these impacts. The risks of unmitigated climate change to human health, the environment and the U.S. economy are real and will be widespread.
- By giving states more time to plan, and utilities more time to meet the reduction requirements, the Clean Power Plan is responsive to states' and stakeholders' concerns about the proposal not giving them the latitude they need to meet the demands of grid reliability and to minimize costs to ratepayers.
- EPA estimates that consumers will see their monthly utility bills go down because of the CPP over the long run. By 2030, the average American family will save about \$7 on their monthly electric bill (more than \$80/year).

BENEFITS TO COMMUNITIES

- The Clean Power Plan and related actions will provide broad benefits to communities across the country, particularly low-income communities, minority communities and tribal communities.
- To ensure that communities share in the benefits of a clean energy economy, EPA is creating the Clean Energy Incentive Program (CEIP) to reward early investments in renewable energy projects in low income communities during 2020 and 2021.
- A number of federal programs are focused on improving health and environmental quality and providing economic opportunity in low income communities.
- As the Clean Power Plan moves forward, EPA will provide communities and states with information on how to access existing financial and technical assistance programs (including federal programs and resources) for reducing carbon pollution through energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.