

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

EPA's CLEAN POWER PLAN, CLIMATE CHANGE AND LABOR

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 LABOR

Extreme summer heat is increasing in the United States. Nationwide, unusually hot summer days have become more common over the last few decades. Exposure to heat can cause heat exhaustion and heat stroke, and exacerbate existing medical conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory disorders. Extreme heat events are particularly problematic for those who work outside or in hot environments, such as firefighters, farmers, and construction workers. [U.S. Global Change Research Program, National Climate Assessment, [2014](#); EPA, [Climate Change Indicators in the United States](#), 2014]

Climate change is expected to bring more extreme summer temperatures in the future. The rise in extreme summer heat is expected to continue in the future. One recent EPA report found that unmitigated climate change is projected to triple the average number of extremely hot days in the United States by the end of the century, resulting in thousands of premature deaths annually by 2100. [EPA, [Climate Change in the United States: Benefits of Global Action](#), 2015]

Climate change is projected to result in billions of lost labor hours and hundreds of billions of lost wages per year by the end of the century. According to an EPA analysis, unmitigated climate change could result in nearly two billion lost labor hours per year by 2100, representing over \$100 billion in lost wages annually. [U.S. Global Change Research Program, National Climate Assessment, [2014](#); EPA, [Climate Change in the United States: Benefits of Global Action](#), 2015]

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 sulfur dioxide from power plants will be 90 percent lower compared to 2005 levels, and 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 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 in 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 CO₂ 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.

THE CLEAN POWER PLAN, JOBS, AND WORKERS

EPA's Clean Power Plan will spur investment in new and existing energy infrastructure, creating good, domestic jobs that help reduce energy demand and construct and maintain new energy sources. However, EPA's analysis indicates the transition to a cleaner energy infrastructure will result in job losses in sectors related to coal extraction and generation.

Every job is important to the EPA and the Obama Administration. EPA has asked the states to consider job impacts and overall economic development when developing their state plans for the Clean Power Plan. States should also consider the following when crafting their plans:

- Engaging with workers and their representatives in the utility and related sectors;
- Assuring that any communities that can be expected to experience job losses can also take advantage of the opportunities for job growth or otherwise transition to healthy, sustainable economic growth; and,
- Targeting economic development resources, including a range of employment and training assistance to workers, and economic development assistance to communities affected by the rapid changes underway in the power sector.
- And because a highly skilled workforce is important for the success of the program, EPA encourages states to plan for how workers installing measures that reduce carbon pollution meet well defined skill standards, such as workers trained in registered apprenticeship programs.

In response to the ongoing changes in the U.S. energy markets, in 2015 the Obama Administration launched the Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative, an interagency effort led by the Economic Development Administration in the Department of Commerce. POWER was launched to respond to current trends in the power sector toward cleaner power generation that have negatively impacted workers and communities in the coal economy. POWER aligns, leverages and targets economic and workforce development assistance to partnerships anchored in coal communities with funding from the Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Small Business Administration, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and technical assistance and resources from five additional federal agencies. . For more information about POWER, visit <http://www.eda.gov/power/>.

GET INVOLVED

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

To ensure opportunities for the public to continue to participate in decision-making, EPA will be providing training and resources throughout the implementation process.

LEARN MORE

For more information on the Clean Power Plan, visit www2.epa.gov/cleanpowerplan.

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

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