

# Clean Power Plan and Health



The Clean Power Plan sets the first ever national power plant carbon pollution standards. Currently, there are standards set for toxics, acid gases, heavy metals, and smog-forming and soot-forming emissions from power plants to protect health, and standards on carbon pollution are no different. The standards also set clear expectations for the next generation of power plants to ensure that they are the cleanest, most efficient, modern power plants.

## **Carbon pollution harms health:**

- Power plants are the largest single source of carbon pollution in the U.S., which is 32 percent of the total greenhouse gases produced in the country<sup>i</sup>.
- The buildup of carbon pollution will create warmer temperatures, which may increase the risk of unhealthy smog levels. Carbon pollution worsens climate change and related health effects.
- Millions of children have asthma attacks every year, and ozone smog pollution is a well-known trigger. Increases in smog will mean more childhood asthma attacks and complications for those with lung disease. Children are more susceptible to the health effects of air pollution because their lungs are still developing, and they often spend more time outdoors than adults.
- Efforts enacted now to reduce greenhouse gases (e.g. carbon dioxide) from all sources in the U.S. would prevent more than 16,000 premature deaths by 2030<sup>ii</sup>.
- The lives saved result from reductions in smog- and soot-forming pollution that occur as carbon is reduced, as actions to clean up carbon have the benefit of cleaning up other pollutants.

## **The Clean Power Plan must be fully implemented to protect health:**

- The Clean Air Act is one of the nation's most important public health laws, with a long history of success. With overwhelming bipartisan support, Congress granted EPA the authority to reduce air pollution to protect public health decades ago. The Supreme Court has affirmed multiple times that this authority extends to carbon pollution.
- Americans support strong limits on pollution from power plants. According to a bipartisan survey, voters strongly support EPA's efforts to update clean air protections, with 72 percent of voters wanting EPA to set limits on power plant carbon pollution. Nearly three quarters of voters said that we do not have to choose between air quality and a strong economy – we can achieve both. And a 2-to-1 majority (60 to 31 percent) believes that strengthening safeguards against pollution will create, not destroy, jobs by encouraging innovation<sup>iii</sup>.

*For more information, contact the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments:*

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<sup>i</sup> [https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/cleanpowerplan/learn-about-carbon-pollution-power-plants\\_.html#powerplants](https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/cleanpowerplan/learn-about-carbon-pollution-power-plants_.html#powerplants)

<sup>ii</sup> West et al. (2013). Co-benefits of mitigating global greenhouse gas emissions for future air quality and human health. *Nature Climate Change*, 3, 885-889.

<sup>iii</sup> American Lung Association. (2014). *New poll shows widespread bipartisan support for stronger methane pollution standards, more clean air protections*. Retrieved from <http://www.lung.org/about-us/media/press-releases/new-poll-shows-widespread-support-methane.html>