



COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRATS
ENERGY & COMMERCE
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

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Statement of Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
**Hearing on “EPA's Proposed 111(d) Rule for Existing Power Plants: Legal
and Cost Issues”**

March 17, 2015

Thank you Chairman Whitfield and Ranking Member Rush for holding this hearing on the EPA Clean Power Plan.

As we sit here today, unchecked climate change continues to reshape our world. According to NOAA, 2014 was the warmest year ever recorded, and nine of the ten hottest years have occurred since 2000.

We know this warming is due to carbon pollution from fossil fuels accumulating in the atmosphere, trapping more heat, and changing our climate. We can already see the effects of this warming in rapidly melting ice sheets and glaciers, extreme droughts and wildfires, increased

storm damages, shrinking coral reefs and beyond. Globally, the costs of these impacts easily reach into billions of dollars each year. And that trend shows no sign of slowing down.

To that end, EPA has proposed a workable plan to reduce emissions of carbon pollution from power plants, which are the largest uncontrolled source of man-made greenhouse gases in the U.S. Today, we will hear more about the Clean Power Plan, but there are a few features that merit emphasizing in advance.

- The Clean Power Plan is not a one-size-fits-all proposal for reducing emissions. It uses a flexible, state-based approach that takes account of each individual state's unique capacity to reduce emissions from its electricity sector.
- EPA is not proposing that states act overnight—states have until 2030 to meet their final goals and the plan's interim goals don't begin until 2020.
- The Clean Power Plan falls well within the legal authority—and responsibility—of EPA to address carbon pollution from power plants. The system-wide approach is based on the plain language of the Clean Air Act.
- Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Clean Power Plan is just a proposal and is not yet finalized.

EPA received over 3.5 million public comments on the Clean Power Plan, and is reviewing those comments as we speak. EPA can and will make adjustments to its proposal. EPA is looking hard at a range of issues related to timing, reliability, technical and

legal issues. EPA is working in close coordination with states, utilities, grid operators and other federal agencies, like DOE and FERC, to make sure the plan is done right.

There are those who deny science. They claim that climate change is not real or manmade—that it is caused by natural cycles or sunspots. That simply is untrue. The world's leading scientists have told us that climate change is happening, is caused by humans, and will have extremely serious impacts. The Republican-led Congress has not listened to the scientists, and has yet to take action to address these serious climate threats. Just saying no isn't an option anymore. We must reduce our carbon emissions, and the Clean Power Plan is a reasonable first step. So, those who have concerns with EPA's plan have a responsibility to not just criticize it, but also to propose alternative ways to achieve the same goal.

There are always those who are willing to make absurd arguments on behalf of companies that profit from the status quo. We will hear today from some that EPA's plan is not legal, that it is unworkable, and that some states may refuse to participate.

Those making such arguments aren't really interested in finding solutions to our carbon pollution problem. They aren't interested in developing a plan to help us reduce emissions while still maintaining a safe, reasonably priced electricity system. To quote the words of EPA Administrator McCarthy, they are just trying to "put their heads in the sand." They are more than welcome to do that, but history will not treat them kindly.

Keep this in mind as we listen today, and during future hearings and debates on the Clean Power Plan. I think you will be able to recognize those who are simply arguing for inaction on behalf of entrenched fossil fuel interests. Compare them to those who want to act on climate change, and also want the development of our path forward to be thoughtful, sensible and effective. For my part, I am in the latter camp and urge all of my colleagues to join me.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses.