National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

November 17, 2015

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
US House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
US House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Pallone:

On behalf of America's electric cooperatives, I write to express strong support for H.J.Res. 71 and H.J.Res. 72 resolutions under the Congressional Review Act to disapprove the rules issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for new and existing power plants. NRECA opposes the Clean Power Plan, one of the most aggressive and controversial regulations in history, because it will adversely affect our ability to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

As not-for-profits serving 93 percent of the nation's persistent poverty counties, America's electric cooperatives recognize first-hand the importance of affordable power. Left unchecked, EPA's plan will usher in an era of escalating electric bills and stifled economic growth. The hardest hit will be those who can least afford to pay more to keep the lights on – families living on fixed incomes or in poverty.

EPA's rule provides no relief for electric cooperatives that have invested billions in plant upgrades to enhance efficiency and environmental performance. In some cases, electric cooperatives own, and carry debt on, power plants with a useful life running into 2040 and beyond. The forced closure of these plants means co-op member-owners will pay twice for their electricity: once for the shuttered plant and once again for the purchase of replacement power.

Earlier this summer, the United States Supreme Court remanded EPA's Mercury and Air Toxics Standard (MATS) on the grounds the Agency failed to properly account for the costs. In the absence of a court stay, the remand came after numerous power plants were forced to shut down under the MATS rule. This serves as a fresh reminder as energy consumers, producers and dozens of state governments ask to hit the "pause" button on the rule. Based on this experience, we are arguing strenuously for a court stay of the Clean Power Plan.

Because a court stay is no surety, we advocate just as strenuously for congressional action to reverse course on this ill-conceived rule. For these and other reasons, we commend Chairman Ed Whitfield (R-KY) for his leadership in advancing the pair of resolutions and agree that both are important to protect grid reliability and ratepayers around the country from higher electricity prices. Again, NRECA urges a yes vote for both H.J.Res. 71 and H.J.Res. 72 in committee and swift advancement to the House floor.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Connor
Interim CEO, NRECA