

Statement of U.S. Senator Tom Carper
At Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Meeting to
solicit public comment on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's proposal to replace
the Clean Power Plan

Chase Center, Wilmington, DE

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5:00PM

I want to thank Governor Carney and DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin for their leadership on climate change and other environmental issues critical for the people of Delaware. I also want to thank everyone who came today to make their voices heard on this important issue.

I am here today to speak out against the Trump EPA's Dirty Power Plan, a proposal intended to replace Obama's Clean Power Plan. This proposal fails to address climate change and will put all Americans' health at risk.

For decades under Republican and Democratic leadership, our nation's premier scientific agencies, such as NASA and NOAA, have joined with the global scientific community in researching climate change and its global effects. From this research, we learn more every year about how damaging climate change is – and will be - to our environment and our health.

Here is what NASA, NOAA and the global scientific community are telling us; the science behind climate change is settled. Climate change is real. It's happening. Human activities – such as burning fossil fuels – are greatly contributing to the problem.

NASA and NOAA found that climate change is leading to rising global temperatures, rising sea levels, and more intense and frequent weather events. NOAA tells us that extreme weather events costing \$1 billion or more have doubled in frequency over the past decade – with \$425 billion in losses occurring over the last five years. That's \$425 billion with a 'B.'

It's hard to find a part of the country that isn't being affected by extreme weather events fueled by climate change. In the past two years alone, two 1,000 year floods have devastated Ellicott City, Maryland, just 90 miles down the road. Forest fires, fueled by extreme heat and drought, have ravaged states like Montana, California and Oregon in the past year.

Since we started keeping records, only forty-nine Category 5 hurricanes have threatened the United States. Three of the forty-nine Category 5 hurricanes occurred in the last year. And the hurricanes that aren't Category 5 are having devastating effects. Today, the people of Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina are struggling to recover from historic hurricanes that have devastated their communities.

Beyond direct health impacts, scientists and medical professionals are discovering other ways climate change threatens human health. These studies have linked climate change to increased

ground-level ozone and allergens in the air, deadly high temperatures, and more pests in our food and water – all of which are having a negative impact on human health.

Climate change is costing Americans in the form of lost incomes, lost livelihoods, and sadly, in some cases, lost lives.

Just this week, the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), issued a report based on 6,000 scientific studies written by 91 scientists from 40 countries. The report concludes that if the global community does not enact “rapid and far-reaching” carbon reduction policies in the next decade, we could face irreversible damage to our climate as soon as 2040.

This reality of climate change is scary, especially for Delaware, the lowest lying state in the nation. For me, climate change is not a science lecture, it affects my constituents daily. This issue is personal.

As I see it, we have two options: we fight by addressing and adapting to climate change; or we stick our heads in the sand and let fossil fuel emissions destroy our world for generations to come.

I say we fight. That’s why I have worked my entire Senate career to find ways to move us away from fossil fuels, reduce carbon pollution, and help communities adapt to a new climate future. It all started in 2002, when I introduced one of the first bills in Congress to cap carbon emissions from coal plants and it my fight continues today in passing some of the most robust resiliency measures to date to protect coastal communities and our nation’s drinking water systems from extreme weather and rising seas.

Fortunately, I’ve not been alone in fighting for a better climate future. Our nation is in a much better place than we were just a decade ago when it comes to reducing carbon emissions.

The Trump Administration would have you believe that it was just dumb luck or natural market forces that got us to where we are today. The reality is, it was in large part due to investments made in clean energy by the Obama Administration, Congress, and states like Delaware and California.

It is also due to smart regulations that are good for the economy and good for our environment, such as the Clean Power Plan.

As a result of these smart clean energy policies, our country rebounded from one of its greatest economic downturns in history, lowered energy costs at the meter and the pump for consumers, and implemented clean air protections that protect public health and our climate, all while adding 16 million new jobs -further proving we do not have to choose between clean air, a better climate and a strong economy.

With the Clean Power Plan, EPA mirrored smart policies already happening at the state level, by giving utilities the ability to use a flexible, market-based system to reduce carbon emissions. The Clean Power Plan put our nation’s fossil-fuel power plants on a fifteen-year glide path to reduce

carbon dioxide emissions by a third from 2005 levels. And it provided significant incentives for energy efficiency, which would result in lower electric bills for Americans.

Instead of building on Obama's forward-looking environmental standards, this Administration has decided to turn a blind-eye to the climate science and has taken pride in tearing protections apart. This Administration has not only doubled down on fossil fuels – even when it doesn't make sense economically - but also foolishly kept information from communities that would allow them to build better and smarter and be better prepared for climate events.

The Trump Administration has shown that it is so dead set on rolling back Obama's climate regulations, it is willing to risk American lives in the short-term and long-term. That's abundantly clear in President Trump's proposal.

The Administration has gone so far to call its proposal the "Affordable Clean Energy" plan. No matter what EPA calls this proposal, by the agency's own account it doesn't achieve affordable energy or clean energy. And it definitely doesn't address climate change.

For example, EPA estimates the Clean Power Plan would create \$54 billion per year in public health and climate benefits. This would prevent 3,600 premature deaths each year through reduced exposure to particle pollution and ozone.

Compare that to the Dirty Power Plan, which by EPA's own analysis shows will increase smog, soot, mercury and carbon pollution and up to 1,400 lives will be lost each year. Let me repeat, 1,400 lives lost annually.

That's enough for me to say no thank you and to give the Dirty Power Plan a failing grade of 'F'.

The Dirty Power Plan does not help consumers save money on energy costs, does not provide businesses with certainty and, instead, will likely cede clean energy jobs to places like China.

To recap – when you compare the Dirty Power Plan fails at: providing cleaner air, saving lives, job creation, energy saving, and a safer climate. That's why in my book the Dirty Power Plan gets a failing grade.

But let's be honest, EPA's Dirty Power Plan proposal isn't a climate change replacement, it's a retreat. It is a retreat from EPA's most basic responsibilities to ensure breathable air, usher in economic progress and tackle the greatest environmental crisis we face on this planet.

EPA knows this is a retreat from its responsibility, which is why I think the agency is rushing this proposal through the regulatory process. The Clean Power Plan reflected an unprecedented two-year outreach and engagement process with states and stakeholders, and was only finalized after the agency held four public hearings and considered 4.3 million comments during a 167 public comment period. Compare that with the Dirty Power Plan, which EPA is only holding one hearing and keeping the comment period open for only 60 days. One hearing.

In closing, I believe one of the main missions of the federal government, chiefly the EPA, is to protect the American people from environmental risks like climate change. Repealing the Clean Power Plan and replacing it with a proposal as ill-conceived as the Dirty Power Plan will have

serious consequences for the health of the public. The American people deserve better than the Dirty Power Plan, plain and simple. My colleagues and I are going to do everything in our power to make sure that happens and I want to thank you for your efforts in this fight, too.

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