

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 8, 2023

The Honorable Michael S. Regan
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Regan,

We write to express our strong support for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) efforts to cut carbon pollution from fossil fuel-fired power plants. Sharply reducing carbon pollution from this massive source is mandated by law, highly cost-effective, and critical to slowing dangerous climate change. We urge EPA to issue, by no later than March 2024, strong and broadly applicable fossil fuel-fired power plant standards that maximize carbon pollution reductions from all polluting sources as swiftly as possible, as supported by the rulemaking record.

In May 2023, as required by law, EPA proposed standards to limit carbon pollution from existing coal-fired power plants, new natural gas-fueled power plants, and some existing gas-fueled plants. Section 111 of the Clean Air Act directs EPA to protect the public from large pollution sources that significantly contribute to air pollution that endangers public health or welfare, such as power plants' carbon pollution, which is driving devastating climate change. Specifically, EPA must issue standards for those sources based on pollution controls that represent the "best system of emissions reduction." We reaffirmed and underscored EPA's authority and obligation to issue these standards for power plants in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which Congress passed and the President signed into law last summer. The IRA amended the Clean Air Act to add section 135(a)(6), which provides EPA funding and direction to use existing Clean Air Act authorities, such as section 111, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electricity generation. Other provisions of the IRA and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law make available hundreds of billions of dollars to support cleaner electricity production, which is already accelerating market trends toward cleaner electricity. EPA's rule should build on these resources and ongoing progress, and drive further advances.

We cannot over-emphasize the importance of adopting broadly applicable power plant carbon pollution standards for tackling the climate crisis. The power sector emits over a quarter of U.S. greenhouse gas pollution, and it can reduce the greatest quantity of emissions more swiftly and at a lower cost than any other sector of the economy. There is simply no plausible way to achieve our domestic and international climate goals without very substantial cuts in carbon pollution from all large power plant sources. In addition, cleaning up our electricity supply is key to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from other high-polluting economic sectors that can shift from fossil fuels to electricity. Transportation, home heating, and some industrial sectors are all using electrification to cut carbon pollution, and the success of this strategy depends on an increasingly carbon-free electricity supply. These rules will help produce the necessary clean electricity.

We also commend EPA on the real progress you have made under this Administration in elevating the needs of communities with environmental justice concerns, which have historically borne disproportionate pollution burdens and had little voice in decisions affecting their health and well-being. In developing the final rules, we encourage you to engage robustly with the communities that have experienced the most harm from fossil fuel development and use, as well as from climate change impacts. The power plant standards have the potential to produce substantial benefits for health and well-being in many of these communities, but compliance monitoring and enforcement will be key to realizing those benefits and must be part of EPA's work to develop and implement these rules. EPA should also continue to update and enforce other environmental requirements that apply to fossil-fueled power plants to reduce the overall pollution burden on communities from these plants, beyond just air emissions. To further improve safeguards to protect frontline communities, we encourage EPA to work with other departments and agencies with jurisdiction over other aspects of these facilities and any pollution control technologies used.

Workers and unions involved with both fossil-based and clean energy also have a real stake in these rules, and we encourage you to robustly engage with them and take their concerns into account. The clean energy transition is already well underway, offering numerous well-paying, clean energy jobs, but it is important that the Administration be deliberate in directing policies and investments to bring these benefits directly to the communities affected by the energy transition, such as through the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Revitalization.

In closing, we are relying on EPA to issue strong carbon pollution standards for new and existing fossil fuel-fired power plants by no later than March 2024. These standards are necessary to slow climate change and protect public health, required by law, and are both achievable and highly affordable. We thank you for EPA's crucial work to date and urge you to finish the job in the time required — the stakes could not be higher for the American people and the world as a whole.

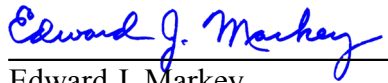
Sincerely,



Thomas R. Carper
Chairman
Committee on Environment
and Public Works



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey

Chair

Committee on Environment
and Public Works

Subcommittee on Clean Air,
Climate, and Nuclear Safety



Benjamin L. Cardin

United States Senator



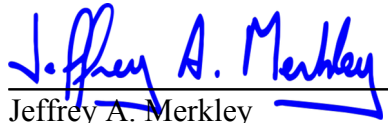
Bernard Sanders

United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse

United States Senator



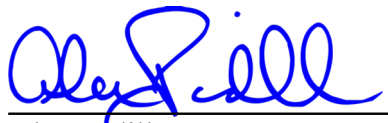
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United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow

United States Senator



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United States Senator



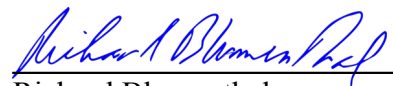
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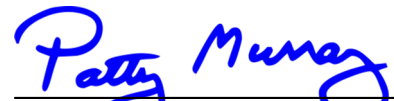
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United States Senator



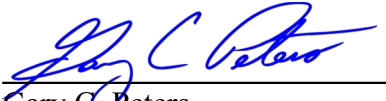
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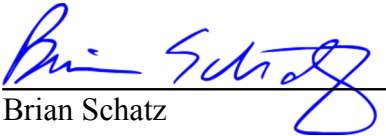
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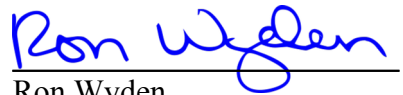
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