



Communities of faith responding to climate change

September 25, 2014
Honors Suite
Education Building at 333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA

Listening session on the proposed Carbon Pollution Standards for Existing Power Plants

Statement from Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light

First, thank you for inviting PA IPL to participate in this session.

PA Interfaith Power & Light —PA IPL— delivered testimony on these same standards at the EPA hearings in Pittsburgh on July 31. We have a copy of that testimony to leave with you today. Twenty *additional* individuals associated with PA IPL also submitted faith-grounded testimony at that hearing. All of those statements can be read on our website, or delivered directly as a set of PDFs. *All* of those testimonies supported the proposed standards as a good step in the right direction. Many called for further action. Most urged quick action to regulate extractive emissions in order to avoid the 3-steps-forward, 2-steps-back dance that will be the result of a short-sighted investment in gas, rather than an athletic leap into the energy future we want for ourselves, our children, our state, and our world.

Today we will focus on Pennsylvania's response to the proposed standards.

First, it seems we must remind our state leaders that climate change is real and urgent, and that its effects are nonpartisan offenders. For clarity, we ask you to look to the re-insurance industry, the survival of which depends on getting both the science and the economics right; look to our nation's Armed Forces which identify climate change as a "threat multiplier;" look to former Secretary of Homeland Defense and PA Governor, Mr. Ridge. Climate change is not a fuzzy issue, a liberal issue, a greeny-granola issue, or a conservative issue. It is a human issue.

To those who fear voters, we offer this: *regardless of how urgently they are concerned about climate change*, Pennsylvanians want clean energy. Please re-read the 2012 report "Pennsylvanians' Attitudes Toward Renewable Energy" funded by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, a bipartisan, bicameral legislative agency of the PA General Assembly.

And so, to the proposed standards:

Here in Pennsylvania, we ought not to toe the line. We can do better. Taking baby steps wastes time, energy, and money. Taking baby steps leaves Pennsylvanians near the back of the line on clean air to breathe. Taking baby steps means investing in infrastructure that more rightly belongs in the 20th century. We deserve to be a

21st century state. We have the know-how. We want the clean air, the clean jobs, and the pride of leadership.

We should invest in renewables. Our AEPS is much too low. The operator of the 13-state electricity grid that covers all of PA tells us that wholesale electricity prices could be *reduced* by \$9-\$21 billion annually by raising the proportion of renewable electricity to 20-30%. Robust study found that increasing renewable generation to 30% would cause *no* reliability problems. Most important for PA IPL, such an increase would reduce carbon pollution by 18-29%.

We should use less electricity. The PUC's State Wide Evaluation (SWE) of Act 129 concluded that energy efficiency and conservation cut electricity use and saved money for consumers *and* utilities. Act 129 was rightly continued in 2012. More can be done.

We should become a participant instead of an observer in RGGI, an initiative that has exceeded emissions targets, lowered electricity prices, *and* been publicly supported by most generators and utilities. We've been an observer for years. It's time to step onto the dance floor.

As important as it is for congregations and individuals to reduce our emissions as part of our faithful walk, it takes a long time to fill a bucket with drops of water. We no longer have that luxury. Taking decisive action to meet the proposed standards is the right thing to do legally and morally. Acting to reduce carbon pollution will yield clear side benefits for Pennsylvanians, too.

PA IPL urges the DEP to create a State Implementation Plan that is worth something. Step up and lead us from "all of the above" toward power from Above. Begin today.

Respectfully submitted,

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— Communities of faith responding to climate change —

July 31, 2014

William S. Moorhead Federal Building
Pittsburgh, PA

Hearings on the proposed Carbon Pollution Standards for Existing Power Plants
Statement from Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light

Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light is made up of individuals and communities of faith, responding to climate change in active, faithful hope. We are drawn to this work by the scripture and wisdom of our traditions. We turn to different sources for the words, but they carry a shared call to care for Creation — for the world and all who dwell in it— and to particular care for the most vulnerable people.

Climate change magnifies ills that faith communities have long responded to: food insecurity, water insecurity, disease, conflict, and many natural disasters, and we are stepping up again. We know that the EPA's charge is to protect the health and welfare of Americans. We also know that the health and welfare of other beings and other peoples is at risk. We act for them as well.

People of faith are increasingly doing what we can to limit emissions. As much as we may take on, as meaningful and important as it is to do the work as part of our faithful walk, it takes a long time to fill a bucket with drops of water, and we no longer have that luxury. Cutting emissions 30% from 2005 levels is a broad goal, bold enough to begin our necessary turn away from combustion, toward sustainable and renewable sources of energy. Allowing states to develop singular paths to the shared goal allows each to showcase its particular strengths, and to shift nimbly as we develop new ways of using the resources we are freely and forever given: the wind, the sun, and the tides.

Today we know you will hear some comments that are rooted in fear instead of hope. You will hear that the Clean Power Plan will lay off workers, and that communities are hurting. That is partly right: communities *are* hurting. Mine tailings, coal dust, coal emissions, and coal ash *are* hurting communities—poor communities— right now, increasing lung disease, heart disease, and cancer. The resulting climate change will hurt us all, but the poorest fare worst. We cannot knowingly continue to stand on their backs.

Coal representatives will tell you that acting responsibly on carbon pollution will steal jobs from communities on the economic edge. They won't say that those jobs have never driven executive decision-making. They won't mention that those jobs are already in a decades-long decline, or that the decline is about bottom lines, not about federal policy nor even booming gas. Combined coal output from West Virginia and Kentucky has held nearly steady since 1983, but mining jobs have

dropped by half. We *do* need to help generate new paths for employees and communities that currently depend on fossil fuels. Holding tight to the diminishing fuels of the 18th and 19th centuries instead of reaching forward to the power of the 21st is not the way to do it.

Like our faith communities, the United States is explicitly founded on values. As such, we have a unique opportunity to lead according to those values. When we don't, as we have not on climate change, our silence is deafening. When these proposed standards were announced in June, the world took note. China immediately began hinting at an absolute cap on its own carbon emissions, and has since created 8 pilot carbon trading markets. Christians talk about acting as a "city on a hill" — when we act as we should, using the gifts we've been given, the example shines, and draws others in. PA IPL applauds these proposed standards for their leadership as well as their direct effect.

PA IPL urges the EPA to implement the carbon pollution standards as quickly as possible, and we urge states (particularly Pennsylvania) to begin creating meaningful State Implementation Plans without delay. In order that these two steps forward are not undercut by a giant step back, we also urge the EPA to act quickly to release meaningful standards for methane, particularly extractive methane.

Faith communities are already switching off our harmful "standard mix" electricity. We look forward to meaningful national (and international) movement from "all of the above" to power from Above.

Respectfully submitted,

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