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EPA Proposes New Carbon Pollution Standards for Fossil Fuel-Fired Power Plants to Tackle the Climate Crisis and Protect Public Health

New proposed standards for coal and new natural gas fired power plants would avoid more than 600 million metric tons of CO₂ pollution, while also preventing 300,000 asthma attacks and 1,300 premature deaths in 2030 alone

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Contact Information

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WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed new carbon pollution standards for coal and natural gas-fired power plants that will protect public health, reduce harmful pollutants and deliver up to \$85 billion in climate and public health benefits over the next two decades.

The proposal for coal and new natural gas power plants would avoid up to 617 million metric tons of total carbon dioxide (CO₂) through 2042, which is equivalent to reducing the annual emissions of 137 million passenger vehicles, roughly half the cars in the United States. Through 2042, EPA estimates the net climate and health benefits of the standards on new gas and existing coal-fired power plants are up to \$85 billion.

The proposals would also result in cutting tens of thousands of tons of particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen oxide, harmful air pollutants that are known to endanger people's health, especially in communities that for too long have disproportionately shouldered the burden of high pollution and environmental injustice. In 2030 alone, the proposed standards would prevent:

- approximately 1,300 premature deaths;
- more than 800 hospital and emergency room visits;
- more than 300,000 cases of asthma attacks;
- 38,000 school absence days;
- 66,000 lost workdays.

“By proposing new standards for fossil fuel-fired power plants, EPA is delivering on its mission to reduce harmful pollution that threatens people's health and wellbeing,” **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan.** “EPA's proposal relies on proven, readily available technologies to limit carbon pollution and seizes the momentum already underway in the power sector to move toward a cleaner future. Alongside historic investment taking place across America in clean energy manufacturing and deployment, these proposals will help deliver tremendous benefits to the American people—cutting climate pollution and other harmful pollutants, protecting people's health, and driving American innovation.”

Consistent with EPA's traditional approach to establishing pollution standards under the Clean Air Act, the proposed limits and guidelines would require ambitious

reductions in carbon pollution based on proven and cost-effective control technologies that can be applied directly to power plants. They also provide owners and operators of power plants with ample lead time and substantial compliance flexibilities, allowing power companies and grid operators to make sound long-term planning and investment decisions, and supporting the power sector's ability to continue delivering reliable and affordable electricity. EPA's analysis found that power companies can implement the standards with a negligible impact on electricity prices, well within the range of historical fluctuations.

Together with other recent EPA actions to address health-harming pollution from the power sector, today's proposed rule delivers on the Administration's commitment to reduce pollution from the power sector while providing long-term regulatory certainty and operational flexibility. In addition, EPA and the Department of Energy recently signed a memorandum of understanding <https://epa.gov/newsreleases/us-department-energy-and-environmental-protection-agency-partner-support-reliable> to support grid reliability and resiliency at every stage as the agency advances efforts to reduce pollution, protect public health, and deliver environmental and economic benefits for all.

President Biden's policy agenda has already kicked off a clean energy and manufacturing boom across the country and is adding momentum for technologies like carbon capture and storage (CCS) and clean hydrogen. Today, thanks to this progress, the power sector has a broad set of tools to deploy clean, affordable energy, take advantage of ready-to-go advanced pollution reduction technologies, create and retain good-paying union jobs, and reduce energy costs for families and businesses. EPA took account of this significant technologic and economic progress in developing the proposed rule and anticipates that power companies will take advantage of these tools, and trends, when determining how to most cost-effectively meet the proposed standards and emission guidelines.

The technology-based standards EPA is proposing include:

- Strengthening the current New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) for newly built fossil fuel-fired stationary combustion turbines (generally natural gas-fired)

- Establishing emission guidelines for states to follow in limiting carbon pollution from existing fossil fuel-fired steam generating EGUs (including coal, oil and natural gas-fired units)
- Establishing emission guidelines for large, frequently used existing fossil fuel-fired stationary combustion turbines (generally natural gas-fired)

Based on a separate analysis, EPA is projecting the proposed standards for existing gas-fired plants and the third phase of the NSPS could achieve up to 407 million metric tons of CO₂ emission reductions. As EPA works to finalize the rulemaking, the agency will complete additional advanced modeling, aligning methodologies across the rulemaking and considering real-world scenarios within the power sector to best understand how components of the rule impact each other.

As required by section 111 of the Clean Air Act, these proposed standards and emission guidelines reflect the best system of emission reduction (BSER) that has been demonstrated to improve the emissions performance of the sources, taking into account costs, energy requirements, and other factors. In developing these proposed carbon pollution standards, EPA considered a range of technologies including CCS, utilizing low-GHG hydrogen, and adopting highly efficient generation technologies.

Installation of controls such as CCS for coal and gas plants, and low-GHG hydrogen co-firing for gas plants are more cost-effective for power plants that operate at greater capacity, more frequently, or over longer time periods. The proposed standards and guidelines take this into account by establishing standards for different subcategories of power plants according to unit characteristics such as their capacity, their intended length of operation, and/or their frequency of operation.

The proposal requires that states, in developing plans for existing sources, undertake meaningful engagement with affected stakeholders, including communities disproportionately burdened by pollution and climate change impacts, as well the energy communities and workers who have powered our nation for generations. President Biden's Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization has identified historic resources [\[7\]](#) for energy communities to invest in infrastructure, deploy new technologies that can help clean up the electric power sector, support energy workers and spur long-term economic

revitalization.

EPA also conducted an environmental justice analysis, which shows these proposals would, play a significant role in reducing greenhouse gas pollution, helping avoid the worst impacts of climate change, which is already having a disproportionate impact on underserved and overburdened communities. EPA's proposal also follows guidance [☑](#) from the Council on Environmental Quality to ensure that the advancement of carbon capture, utilization, and sequestration technologies are done in a responsible manner that incorporates the input of communities and reflects the best available science. Consistent with this guidance, EPA will engage with communities and stakeholders on opportunities to ensure that deployment of carbon capture and sequestration under the proposal is done in a responsible manner.

The proposed standards build on the momentum already underway in the power sector to move toward a cleaner future. Since 2005, the power sector has reduced carbon dioxide emissions 36 percent

<https://cfpub.epa.gov/ghgdata/inventoryexplorer/#electricitygeneration/entiresector/allgas/category/all>

while continuing to keep pace with growing energy demand. President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act provides historic investments in pollution control technologies and clean energy, and together, will move the United States closer to ensuring a cleaner, healthier future for all communities.

EPA will take comment on these proposals for 60 days after publication in the Federal Register. EPA will also hold a virtual public hearing and will make additional information available on the website. Registration for the public hearing will open after the proposal is published in the Federal Register.

The agency will also host virtual trainings to provide communities and Tribes with information about the proposal and about participating in the public comment process. Those trainings will be on June 6 and 7, and registration information is available on EPA's website.

For more information: Greenhouse Gas Standards and Guidelines for Fossil Fuel-Fired Power Plants <https://epa.gov/stationary-sources-air-pollution/greenhouse-gas-standards-and-guidelines-fossil-fuel-fired-power>

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