

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

ICYMI: TOP NJ OFFICIALS URGE EPA NOT TO ABANDON CLEAN POWER PLAN; CALL EPA'S NEW PROPOSED ENERGY RULE UNWISE, DANGEROUS

From the Office of the Attorney General:

Governor, Attorney General, DEP Commissioner, BPU President Object to EPA Change of Course

TRENTON – Acting to protect New Jersey residents from the dangers of climate change, today Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe, and Board of Public Utilities (BPU) President Joseph L. Fiordaliso sent a letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) criticizing EPA's plan to relax greenhouse gas emissions standards and other important regulatory controls for coal-fired power plants.

In 2015, EPA adopted the Clean Power Plan (CPP), which would have reduced the country's reliance on coal and instead promoted renewable energy sources. But the current Administration announced a plan to replace the CPP with a more coal-friendly "Affordable Clean Energy Rule." Enactment of the new rule would repeal the CPP and reverse EPA's existing approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The new rule would also make it easier for the operators of older, coal-fired power plants to avoid installing modern pollution controls.

"By abandoning the Clean Power Plan, the Trump Administration is once again doing everything it can to put polluters and corporations above the American public," **said Governor Phil Murphy**. "We will not sit by idly and allow this to happen. Here in New Jersey, we are making great strides to protect the environment, address climate change, and promote clean energy, and our progress will not be stymied by disastrous federal policy. I am proud to stand with Attorney General Grewal, DEP Commissioner McCabe, and BPU President Fiordaliso as New Jersey joins the fight against these actions by President Trump's EPA."

"Climate change is one of the greatest risks facing New Jersey, and we cannot afford the extreme weather, rising seas, and coastal erosion it will bring," **added Attorney General Grewal**. "Instead of staying the course to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, EPA is only making things worse."

"Make no mistake about it – EPA's efforts are unlawful," **Attorney General Grewal said**. "Federal law requires EPA to ensure that power plants to use the best system to reduce their emissions – but the latest coal-friendly Affordable Clean Energy Rule does just the opposite. New Jersey is committed to fighting back."

"This is another attempt by the Trump administration to drag New Jersey backwards and increase air pollution in the country's most densely populated state," **said New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe**. "New Jersey's residents deserve aggressive action to move our state forward -- reducing climate change and protecting our public health -- not ill-informed and cynical rollbacks."

"Repealing the Clean Power Plan runs counter to everything we are doing in New Jersey to give our citizens a cleaner, healthier environment and to combat the effects of climate change," **said New Jersey Board of Public Utilities President Joseph L. Fiordaliso**. "This decision must be reversed. At the NJBPU we are implementing the Governor's clean energy agenda including robust offshore wind and solar energy programs. We are moving full speed ahead to meet our goal of 100 percent clean energy by 2050 so that we can ensure a better future for our children and grandchildren."

Today's letter to Acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler urges that EPA abandon its proposed new rollback and implement the CPP instead.

The letter points out that, if adopted, the EPA's new Affordable Clean Energy Rule would significantly increase annual carbon dioxide emissions from the nation's power sector. The new rule would encourage and enable existing power plants to increase capacity, increase annual use, and extend their years of operation – all without employing the best available emission control technology. That runs afoul of the Clean Air Act's requirement, the letter notes, that any EPA standard be based on the best available system of emission reduction.

"EPA's proposed rule is unlawful and would allow power plants, one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, to increase their carbon dioxide emissions at a time when the scientific consensus is clear: we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions now if we are to avoid the most catastrophic of climate change impacts for our future generations," today's letter states.

"Simply put," the letter asserts, "the result of this (new) rule would be more money in the pockets of power plants, while increasing air pollution and decreasing air quality."

The letter goes on to describe an array of potentially disastrous future consequences facing New Jersey in the event that climate change – driven by increasing greenhouse gas emissions – continues unchecked.

The letter recalls that Superstorm Sandy wreaked havoc in the state in 2012 as storm surge reached 9-10 feet above normal in some coastal areas, endangering many of the two million residents who live within New Jersey's 239 coastal communities.

It also points out that the effects of climate change are already evident in New Jersey, as illustrated by "hotter weather and more extreme weather events," an increase in annual precipitation, and rising sea levels (approximately 1.6 inches per decade). The letter concludes that EPA's plan to repeal its own Clean Power Plan in favor of a new rule that, in large measure, would deregulate coal-fired power plants "harms states like New Jersey which are experiencing climate change impacts and taking action to protect its residents, natural resources and communities."

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[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](/governor/initiatives/#Health)

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[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

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