

THE WHITE HOUSE

A CLEANER, MORE EFFICIENT POWER SECTOR IN LOUISIANA

We have a moral obligation to leave our children a planet that's not polluted or damaged. By taking action now to combat climate change, including developing homegrown clean energy and cutting energy waste, we can help protect our kids' health, cut carbon pollution, and begin to slow the effects of climate change so we leave a cleaner, safer environment for future generations.

We are already feeling the dangerous and costly effects of a changing climate across the nation. In the past three decades, the percentage of Americans with asthma has more than doubled, and climate change is putting those Americans at greater risk of landing in the hospital. And extreme weather events – from more severe droughts and wildfires in the west to more powerful hurricanes and record heat waves – are affecting communities across the country. Now is the time to act. We have already made progress by moving to cleaner sources of energy and improving the energy efficiency of our cars, trucks, and buildings.

The Clean Power Plan, a key part of the President's Climate Action Plan, cuts harmful carbon pollution from the power sector that's fueling climate change. By setting the first-ever national standards to limit carbon pollution from power plants, the largest single source of U.S. carbon pollution, it will improve the health of Americans across the country, create clean energy jobs, and help households and businesses save on their energy bills. The final plan takes into account the more than 4 million comments received from states and stakeholders across the country, creating strong but achievable standards for power plants that provide flexibility and choices for states and utilities on how to achieve their clean energy future.

The Clean Power Plan Will Improve the Health of Louisiana Residents

We know climate change will put vulnerable populations at greater risk – including the elderly, our kids, and people already suffering from burdensome allergies, asthma, and other illnesses. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 7.7 percent of Louisiana's adult population and 7.9 percent of children in the state suffer from asthma. The sooner we act, by taking responsible steps to cut carbon pollution from existing power plants, the more we can do to prevent impacts that affect all Americans – especially the most vulnerable.

In 2013, 58 million metric tons of carbon pollution were emitted from power plants in Louisiana — equal to the yearly pollution from over 12 million cars. In addition to reducing a portion of this carbon pollution, EPA's guidelines will also cut other forms of air pollution like soot and smog. Overall, these reductions will provide significant health benefits.

Since the Clean Air Act was implemented more than 40 years ago, the EPA has continued to protect the health of communities, in particular those vulnerable to the impacts of harmful pollution, while growing the economy. In fact, since 1970, air pollution has decreased by nearly 70 percent while the economy has tripled in size. The Clean Power Plan builds on this progress, while providing states the flexibility to have clean, reliable, and affordable electricity.

Reducing Carbon Pollution Lowers Risks and Costs for Louisiana

Louisiana is part of the U.S. National Climate Assessment's Southeast Region. The findings in the National Climate Assessment underscore the need for urgent action to combat the threats from climate change, protect American citizens and communities today, and build a sustainable future for our kids and grandkids.

According to the third U.S. National Climate Assessment Highlights report, regional and state-specific impacts include:

- *Sea Level Rise:* Nationally, more than 5,790 square miles and more than \$1 trillion of property and structures are at risk of inundation from sea level rise of two feet above current sea level – an elevation which could be reached as soon as 2050, and sooner in areas of rapid land subsidence. The pace of sea level rise will increasingly lead to inundation of coastal wetlands in the region. Such a crisis in land loss has occurred in coastal Louisiana for several decades, with 1,880 square miles having been lost since the 1930s as a result of natural and man-made factors. With tidal wetland loss, protection of coastal lands and people against storm surge will be compromised.
- *Infrastructure:* Large numbers of cities, roads, railways, ports, airports, oil and gas facilities, and water supplies are at low elevations and potentially vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise. For instance, New Orleans, with roughly half of its population living below sea level, is especially at risk. Louisiana State Highway 1, heavily used for delivering critical oil and gas resources from Port Fourchon, is sinking, resulting in more frequent and more severe flooding during high tides and storms. The Department of Homeland Security estimated that a 90-day shutdown of this road would cost the nation \$7.8 billion. Relative sea level rise will be greater along some coasts (such as Louisiana, Texas, and parts of the Chesapeake Bay), and this will have significant effects on transportation infrastructure, even without the coupling with storms, due to regional land subsidence. Ports and harbors will need to be reconfigured to accommodate higher seas.
- *Agriculture:* The impacts of sea level rise on agriculture derive from decreased freshwater availability, land loss, and saltwater intrusion. Saltwater intrusion is projected to reduce the availability of fresh surface and groundwater for irrigation, thereby limiting crop production in some areas. Agricultural areas in southern Louisiana with shallow groundwater tables are at risk of increased inundation and future loss of cropland.
- *Coastal Storms:* According to a study co-sponsored by a regional utility, coastal counties and parishes in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas already face significant losses that annually average \$14 billion from hurricane winds, land subsidence, and sea level rise. Future losses for the 2030 timeframe could reach \$18 billion (with no sea level rise or change in hurricane wind speed) to \$23 billion (with a nearly 3% increase in hurricane wind speed and just under 6 inches of sea level rise). Approximately 50% of the increase in the estimated losses is related to climate change.
- *Tribes:* Tribal communities in coastal Louisiana are experiencing climate change induced rising sea levels, along with saltwater intrusion, subsidence, and intense erosion and land loss due to oil and gas extraction, levees, dams, and other river management techniques, forcing them to either relocate or try to find ways to save their land.

Louisiana is Already Taking Steps to Reduce Carbon Pollution and has Many Tools to Meet its Clean Power Plan Goals

Mayors in four cities in Louisiana have joined the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, committing to take action in their communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2014, there were approximately 1,700 people employed in the wind and solar industries in Louisiana.

Louisiana, like all states, will have flexibility to meet EPA's goal by using the energy sources that work best for it and by cutting energy waste. To date, all 50 states have demand-side energy efficiency programs, 37 have implemented renewable portfolio standards or goals, and 10 have adopted market-based greenhouse gas emissions programs. EPA's rule builds on progress already underway in each state and

provides guidelines for states to develop plans to meet their carbon pollution reduction goals. It lets states work alone to develop plans or work together with neighboring states to develop multi-state plans, creating thousands of good jobs for Americans who are making our electricity system cleaner and our homes and businesses more energy efficient.

Cutting Carbon Pollution and Saving on Energy Bills in Louisiana

Through the President's leadership, and the initiative of the state of Louisiana, local communities, and the private sector, a number of common sense measures to combat carbon pollution in Louisiana are already in place. EPA's flexible guidelines for power plants will continue driving cost-effective measures to reduce carbon pollution in Louisiana, building off of recent progress:

- ***Increasing the Deployment of Clean Energy:*** Since President Obama took office, the United States has more than doubled its use of renewable energy from wind, solar, and geothermal sources, including tripling wind energy generation and increasing solar generation by more than twenty times. In Louisiana, renewable energy generation from these sources has increased by 15 percent since 2009. The Administration has supported tens of thousands of renewable energy projects throughout the country, including 3,285 in Louisiana, generating enough energy to power nearly 8,000 homes. Furthermore, the U.S. produces more natural gas than ever before – and nearly everyone's energy bill is lower because of it.
- ***Improving Energy Efficiency:*** Using less energy to power our homes and businesses is critical to building a clean and secure energy future. President Obama has made essential investments in research and development to advance energy efficiency, and set new standards to make the things we use every day more efficient. Since October 2009, the Department of Energy and the Department of Housing and Urban Development have jointly completed energy upgrades for more than 1.5 million homes across the country, saving many families more than \$400 on their heating and cooling bills in the first year alone. Nationally, the President's Better Buildings Challenge partners and Better Buildings, Better Plants partners have committed to reduce energy intensity at least 20 percent in over 3 billion square feet of building space.