



Global Warming Safeguards: Reducing Hazardous Greenhouse Gas Pollution

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is working to establish new standards to limit carbon pollution from the nation's biggest polluters: power plants and refineries.

Currently, there are *no limits* on the amount of carbon pollution spewed into the air by power plants and refineries. Excessive greenhouse gases – especially carbon – are the key cause of climate disruption.

By establishing safeguards – called New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) – the EPA will be able to set reasonable limits on pollution from new and existing polluters. This move by EPA to protect public health will save lives, prevent disease and avoid hospitalizations, while creating new jobs installing air pollution control equipment.

What is Carbon Pollution?

While carbon dioxide does occur naturally in the Earth's atmosphere, human activities, such as burning fossil fuels for power, add excessive amounts of it in the atmosphere. This, in turn, captures the Sun's heat, causing our atmosphere to warm up over time.¹

The Health Effects of Carbon Pollution

Carbon pollution is linked to other life-threatening pollutants like mercury, soot and smog, causing illnesses like asthma and developmental problems in children. It is also the main contributor to climate disruption – and climate disruption leads to extreme temperatures. This results in many health problems, including, but not limited to:

- Food shortages
- Heat-related deaths
- Increased levels of disease, including malaria and yellow fever
- Increased air and water pollution

The Cost of the Status Quo

Carbon pollution poses serious threats to Americans' health, our economy and our future, but there are currently *no limits* on the amount of carbon pollution being spewed into the air.

Because there is currently no national standard for limiting carbon pollution, different power plants in different states have conflicting standards for controlling pollution, putting some businesses at a disadvantage.

What's more, air pollution knows no boundaries or state lines. Without a clear, national standard to safeguard against pollution, many Americans will continue breathing dirty air that has blown across state lines – even if their home state enforces pollution limits.

The Need for Strong Carbon Pollution Standards

The standards will allow the EPA to focus on the industries that create the lion's share of the nation's carbon pollution, which levels the playing field across states and provides businesses with certainty and a fair shake.

EPA's plan will set clear goals for cleaning up the way we power our country, a move that will make for healthier kids and families and create much-needed jobs.

How New Carbon Pollution Standards Will Work

EPA has committed to issuing carbon pollution standards for the biggest polluters, power plants and refineries, in the next two years. Once in effect, these safeguards will improve air quality and the health of the millions of Americans, while reducing carbon pollution.

EPA will issue these final New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) for power plants in May 2012, and the final NSPS for oil refineries in November 2012. Once the EPA issues these safeguards, state agencies will begin plans to reduce carbon pollution from new and existing power plants and refineries.

The EPA's standards will only affect the biggest, dirtiest sources of pollution, power plants and oil refineries. The standards will be based on existing technology that is available, proven and affordable for the power plants and refineries that are affected. There is no reason why these big polluters shouldn't be using these tools. The EPA, however, will not mandate any particular technology, giving businesses and state agencies flexibility to decide how to operate while reducing pollution.

We Need Strong Carbon Pollution Protections from EPA

In the 40 years since Americans demanded its creation, EPA has saved millions of lives by enforcing clean air and water standards. More than 1.7 million asthma attacks and \$110 billion in health costs were avoided in 2010 alone thanks to the agency's efforts.

Carbon pollution safeguards will allow the EPA to focus on the industries that create the lion's share of the nation's carbon pollution and help to improve the lives and health of millions of Americans who suffer from asthma and other life-threatening illnesses.

¹ http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/downloads/Climate_Basics.pdf