

Core Message: We have an obligation to protect our children and future generations from the impacts of climate change, and we can by setting the first-ever limits on carbon pollution from power plants. Carbon pollution fuels climate change, which triggers more asthma attacks and respiratory disease, worsens air quality, and contributes to more frequent, destructive, costly and deadly extreme weather events.

Power plants are responsible for 40 percent of the carbon pollution in the United States, our single largest source. Setting the first-ever federal limits on carbon pollution from these power plants is a reasonable and essential step to address climate change.

While many states and local communities have taken action on climate change, this new federal safeguard will set commonsense limits on carbon pollution, inspire investment in infrastructure to protect communities from the climate change impacts they are already experiencing, and spur the kind of innovation that will power America with clean energy in the 21st century. The new safeguards will also give states flexibility to implement plans that increase efficiency, improve resiliency and remove carbon pollution from our air.

Three-Part Formulation

1. We have a moral obligation to act.
2. Communities all over America are already being harmed and taking action.
3. The climate action plan proposes commonsense solutions, including the first-ever limits on carbon pollution from power plants.

From Devastating Impacts To Commonsense Solutions:

1. Communities across the country are already seeing and feeling the impacts of climate change, from increased health risks like asthma attacks and respiratory disease, to devastating extreme weather events. Both international and national scientific reports have shown that inaction will only increase these threats.
2. Currently we limit how much mercury, arsenic, soot and other air pollution power plants can dump into our air, but there are no limits on carbon pollution – even though power plants are the single biggest source.
3. We have an obligation to our children and future generations to address the primary cause of climate change: the unlimited dumping of carbon pollution into our air by power plants. Carbon pollution standards will help protect us from the health risks and other impacts of climate change.

Our Obligation

- We have an obligation to protect our children and future generations from climate change by addressing its causes and impacts - including carbon pollution from power plants.
- Power plants account for 40 percent of the carbon pollution in the United States.
- Right now we limit mercury, arsenic, lead, soot and other dangerous pollutants from power plants but not carbon pollution - the key driver of climate change. That's not right and it must change.
- Setting sensible carbon pollution standards for our power plants is the right thing to do.
- The national climate action plan includes provisions to enhance the infrastructure of our communities so they can deal with the impacts of climate change that they're already feeling. It also promotes new energy efficiency measures to conserve energy

and save consumers money, while also investing in clean energy sources, expanding economic opportunity in clean energy and creating jobs.

- Carbon pollution exacerbates climate change, contributes to more frequent and more violent extreme weather that costs communities, the federal government, and our economy billions every year and threatens public health.

Protecting Our Health

- Carbon pollution exacerbates climate change, contributes to more frequent and more violent extreme weather that costs communities, the federal government, and our economy billions every year and threatens public health.
- Currently we limit how much mercury, arsenic, soot and other air pollution power plants can dump into our air,, but there are no federal limits on carbon pollution.
- The carbon pollution causing climate change is responsible for thousands of premature deaths, higher risks of asthma attacks and respiratory disease, and hundreds of thousands of missed work and low activity days.
- Dirty air exacerbated by climate change disproportionately affects low income communities, as well as children, seniors and those who work or play outdoors.
- Nearly half of Americans live in counties that have unhealthy levels of dirty air, according to the American Lung Association.
- Big polluters want to continue to dump unlimited amounts of carbon pollution into the air without penalty and without regard for the public health impacts on children, seniors and families, instead of adopting reasonable carbon pollution safeguards that protect public health and slow climate change. That's wrong.

Growing Our Economy

- New clean energy technologies that produce less carbon pollution will create a new generation of clean energy jobs.
- Setting limits on the carbon pollution causing climate change will spur investment and innovation in clean energy technologies to modernize and clean up power plants.
- Since 1970, every dollar invested in compliance with Clean Air Act standards has yielded \$4-8 in economic benefits.
- Each time an extreme weather event hits a community around the country, the economic impact can be devastating. From 2011-2013 alone, damages from extreme weather events have exceeded \$200 billion.
- While extreme weather events are expensive and in the public eye, inaction on climate change increases the costs related to health care, as well as lost school and work days due to extreme heat and dirty air.

Strong National Support

A [February 2014 poll](#) found that seven out of 10 Americans favor setting limits on carbon pollution from power plants, and more than half believe these safeguards already exist. The poll was conducted for the Sierra Club by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, and also found that 66 percent believe climate change is a serious problem and want the government to address it.

The Opposition

Big Polluters Put Profits Over People

- Big polluters [power companies/polluters and allies] are concerned about profits first and foremost.

- They make hundreds of millions of dollars in profits every year, and some were proven to have overcharged their customers for years, but they complain that new clean air standards would cost too much money to implement.
- They care more about protecting their profits than the well-being of the communities they serve.

Big Polluters Are Bad Corporate Citizens and Pollute Communities

- Big polluters claim to be model corporate citizens who care about the communities they serve, but in reality they are guilty of treating our skies like open sewers and harming residents' health, while resisting requirements to operate more safely and cleanly.
- In one case, they polluted an Ohio town so severely they were forced to buy the entire town to avoid being sued by residents. In fact, big polluters nationwide have faced millions of dollars in fines for illegally releasing dangerous pollutants.

Big Polluters Don't Pay Federal Taxes

- Big polluters claim to be model corporate citizens but in reality, they are guilty of releasing tons of pollution into the air while at the same time doing all they can to avoid paying their fair share.
- Big polluters spend millions to lobby Congress to reduce their taxes so that they would pay even less than many small businesses.

Big Polluters Say They Can't Afford to Clean Up, But Pay Their CEOs Millions

- Big polluters complain that new clean air standards would cost too much money to implement, but they still manage to pay their CEOs millions of dollars each year.
- It would cost pennies on the dollar for power companies to limit the health and environmental damage they are doing, but they care more about protecting their executives' salaries than the health and well-being of the communities they serve.

Big Polluters Harm Public Health

- The air pollution created by big polluters has led to thousands of hospitalizations and deaths and exacerbated asthma attacks and other serious illnesses.
- For decades, they ignored legal limits for the amounts of pollutants they could release into the air and had to be taken to court in order to get them to stop doing so.
- And now they are fighting commonsense limits on industrial carbon pollution as well.

Big Polluters Say They Care About Clean Air, But Fight Pollution Reduction

- Big polluters say that they care about clean air but they fight every effort to reduce pollution.
- These corporations spent millions of dollars lobbying Congress behind the scenes to allow them to CONTINUE polluting and have even sued the government to prevent stronger clean air standards.

Big Polluters Deny Climate Change Even Exists

- Big polluters do not care about climate change and its effects. They only care about their own political agendas and bottom lines.
- In fact, many of them ignore all of the scientific evidence and go so far as to deny climate change even exists.