



**What?** The EPA's Clean Power Plan is a new federal regulation under the Clean Air Act that requires state-by-state reductions of carbon pollution from power plants.

**Why?** As a result of burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas), there is an abundance of carbon dioxide released into the air. Carbon dioxide is referred to as a "greenhouse gas" because it traps heat on our planet, resulting in significant changes to our climate that threaten human health and the environment.<sup>1</sup> From sea level rise, heat waves, droughts, stronger hurricanes, and other disastrous weather events, climate change is a global concern. The localized effects of climate change are most devastating in the places where Indigenous people, people of color, and poor people are least likely to recover.

In the United States, power plants emit nearly 40% of all carbon pollution. Coal-fired power plants are the largest source of this carbon pollution. These power plants are disproportionately located near Indigenous, people of color, and poor communities.

**How?** The EPA's Clean Power Plan requires each state (with the exceptions of Alaska and Hawaii) and some tribal nations to meet specific goals limiting the amount of carbon pollution that can be released by the year 2030. On average, this goal cuts carbon pollution among the states to 30% lower than the amounts emitted in the year 2012. Using the strategies and options summarized below, states develop and implement plans for meeting the carbon pollution limit with the approval and oversight of the EPA. The development of a state's plan for reducing carbon pollution must be an open and transparent process that includes meaningful public participation. If a state declines to develop a plan, the EPA will establish and enforce a plan for the state.

The Clean Power Plan is the first federal regulation to require that states ensure environmental justice in both the development and implementation of their plans reducing power plant pollution. Communities of color and poor communities, who are disproportionately burdened by pollution, are to be provided opportunities to meaningfully participate in the development of the state plans. In addition, strategies for mitigating the adverse impacts of power plant pollution on people of color and poor communities are to be incorporated in the state plan.

The EPA provides states with the following strategies for meeting their carbon pollution limits: (1) increasing the generation of electricity from renewable energy like wind and solar power which emit zero carbon pollution; (2) improving the efficiency of coal-fired power plants to reduce carbon pollution; and (3) increasing the generation of electricity from natural gas which the EPA deems would release less carbon pollution than coal.<sup>2</sup> As required by the Clean Air Act, these strategies are based on techniques and procedures already in use by states and utility companies.

The EPA also gives states the options of two methods for measuring carbon pollution and two types of implementation plans. States can measure carbon pollution in either pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt hour of electricity (lbs/MWh) or in annual tons of carbon dioxide (tons). States also have the option of two implementation plans: the Emission Standards Plan and the State Measures Plan. The Emission Standards Plan allows a state to determine the reduction of pollution from power plants that meet the goal for carbon pollution reduction set by the EPA. The State Measures Plan allows a state to adopt a combination of power plant pollution reduction plus energy efficiency programs, renewable energy, carbon emissions trading, and/or other measures that meet the goal for reduced carbon pollution.

<sup>1</sup> Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is one of several greenhouse gases that trap heat on the planet which contributes to climate change. The abundance of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and its longevity to remain in the atmosphere for thousands of years make it the focus of local, state, national, and international action on climate change.

<sup>2</sup> There is significant opposition to the EPA holding up natural gas as an alternative to coal. Like coal, natural gas is a fossil fuel and a source of carbon pollution. Natural gas is also a source of methane, another greenhouse gas.

## What are the Gulf States required to do?



Using the strategies and options provided in the EPA's Clean Power Plan, states develop plans that meet their individual goals for reduced carbon pollution.

The EPA requires meaningful public participation in the development of the states' plans that includes people of color and poor communities disproportionately burdened by pollution.

- What strategy and option should your state select to meet its carbon pollution limit?
- How should your state engage Indigenous, people of color, and low-income communities in the plan development?
- What are effective strategies to mitigate the harmful exposure of communities to power plant pollution?
- Will renewable energy be a priority in your state's plan?
- Should carbon pollution trading be included in your state's plan?
- How should your state demonstrate that it meets the EPA limits on carbon pollution?

***The devil is in the details!***

### Clean Power Plan Timeline for States

- 9/6/2016:** States must either submit to the EPA a final plan or submit an initial plan with a request for more time.
- 9/6/2017:** States with time extensions submit to the EPA updates on their plan development.
- 9/6/2018:** States submit to the EPA their final and complete plans.
- 2022 – 2029:** States must demonstrate that plans would meet the goals for reduced carbon pollution. If a state's plan won't achieve the CO<sub>2</sub> goal, then the EPA's implements a plan for the state.
- 2030 & beyond:** States must achieve their individual goal for carbon pollution reduction

**Bottom line: People of color and poor communities near power plants should benefit from the Clean Power Plan. This benefit includes an overall reduction of air pollution from power plants that includes respiratory-damaging pollutants. A state plan that causes a community of color or poor community to be burdened with power plant pollution (not limited to carbon dioxide) triggers EPA action to mitigate the adverse impacts.**

1. A state plan must include proximity analysis of the communities near power plants. *Note:* EPA data show power plants are disproportionately located near people of color and poor communities.
2. A state submitting an initial plan must show (a) the community engagement it has undertaken and (b) the plan for engaging people of color and poor communities in the public participation process.
3. A state submitting a plan update must show how it has identified the communities engaging in the development of the final plan.
4. A state that submits a final plan must show how public hearings were made accessible to people of color and poor communities.
5. States are provided federal resources to assist workers affected by the plan with a just transition.
6. The EPA encourages states to incorporate strategies in their plans that reduce other harmful pollutants from power plants (including natural gas plants).
7. During implementation of EPA-approved state plans, the EPA will (a) monitor whether power plant pollution is reduced and (b) assess whether there are any localized air quality issues or adverse impacts on people of color or poor communities to mitigate.

By the year 2030, the EPA requires states to reduce carbon pollution to levels below their 2012 emissions.

Gulf State	% Cut in Carbon Pollution	Carbon Pollution Limit <i>(pounds of carbon dioxide/megawatt hour of electricity &amp; annual tons of carbon dioxide)</i>
AL	33%	1,018 lbs/MWh 56,880,474 tons
FL	26%	919 lbs/MWh 105,094,704 tons
LA	31%	1,121 lbs/MWh 35,427,023 tons
MS	20%	945 lbs/MWh 25,304,337 tons
TX	33%	1,042 lbs/MWh 189,588,842 tons

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) in the Gulf States<sup>3</sup>

Florida, Louisiana, and Texas are among ten states that emit approximately one-half of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

State	Largest GHG Emitter	Percentage of State Total GHG
AL	power plants	46%
FL	power plants	41%
LA	industrial facilities	50%
MS	transportation	33%
	power plants	30%
TX	industrial facilities	29%
	power plants	28%
	transportation	25%

<sup>3</sup> World Resources Institute, U.S. State Emissions Explorer, *available at:* <http://www.wri.org/blog/2015/08/interactive-graphic-what-do-your-state%E2%80%99s-emissions-look>

