

American Public Health Association * Physicians for Social Responsibility * American Lung Association * Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments * Health Care without Harm * Allergy & Asthma Network * National Network of Public Health Institutes * Trust for America's Health * American Medical Student Association * Program on Climate and Health-George Mason University * Public Health Institute * Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America * American College of Preventive Medicine

An Open Letter to the Governors of the Nation

Dear Governor,

As physicians, nurses, other health practitioners, public health professionals and concerned citizens, we ask you to support and advance the Clean Power Plan to help protect the health of Americans from the threats to health and survival posed by climate change. Please move forward to develop and submit your State Implementation Plans under the Clean Power Plan despite the current stay on federal implementation.

Climate change is one of the greatest health threats of the 21st century. The American Medical Association has declared that “climate changes will create conditions that affect public health, with disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations” that include children, the elderly, and the poor. In June 2015 the AMA passed a resolution calling for “efforts to limit carbon dioxide emissions through the reduction of the burning of coal in the nation’s power generating plants.”

Americans already face increased health risks associated with climate change due to intense storms, heat waves, worsened air quality, flooding, sea surges, spread of insect-borne diseases, extended allergy seasons, and more. Climate change also damages our health care infrastructure and endangers patients. When Hurricane Sandy struck in 2012, several large New York hospitals had to close, and intensive care patients in Bellevue Hospital Center were evacuated down darkened stairwells lit only by flashlights. At the global level, the Climate & Health Commission of the prestigious medical journal The Lancet has stated that the threat to human health from climate change is so great, it could undermine the last fifty years of gains in development and global health.

The Clean Power Plan helps protect us from these grave and growing threats. It sets an individualized, achievable target for each state to reduce carbon emissions from its electricity sector, and gives the states time and flexibility to meet those goals. Taken together, the states would succeed in reducing carbon emissions from power plants by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. These reductions are a significant contribution to national efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, yet are still small in comparison with the task at hand to limit global temperatures from rising over 2°C.

Furthermore, reducing carbon pollution from power plants reduces other dangerous air pollutants at the same time. This directly benefits local communities. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Clean Power Plan, if implemented on its original timeline, will prevent up to 3,600 premature deaths, 90,000 asthma attacks, and 300,000 lost days of work and school in the year 2030.

Proceeding with plans to reduce carbon pollution from your state's electricity sector will benefit the health of your state's residents.

The Clean Power Plan enjoys overwhelming public support. More than two-thirds of Americans support the Clean Power Plan and want action on climate to be a priority. Furthermore, the Plan is anticipated to produce \$54 billion in health and climate benefits. We urge you to proceed with planning to implement the Clean Power Plan as smart policy for our health, our climate, and our economic future.

Sincerely,

Physicians for Social Responsibility

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American Lung Association

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

Health Care without Harm

Allergy & Asthma Network

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PSR-Florida

PSR-Iowa

Public Health Association of Iowa

Public Health Association of Nebraska

PSR-San Francisco Bay Area

PSR-Chesapeake

PSR-Philadelphia

Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate-MN

PSR-Oregon

PSR-Washington

PSR-North Carolina

PSR-New Mexico

PSR-Arizona

PSR-Tennessee

PSR-Wisconsin

PSR-Texas

PSR-Chicago

PSR-Maine