Hello, my name is Sue and I have lived in Atlanta for the past seven years. For four of those years I have volunteered every Saturday morning at one of the Atlanta community’s organic farmers markets. Seeing the farmers every week, I have gotten to know them, their families, and the stories of their farms personally. I have grown accustomed to Georgia’s predictable ebb and flow of different produce as the seasons change; sweet potatoes and hearty greens in the autumn and winter make way for tiny sweet spring strawberries, which precede juicy summer peaches. The regularity and variety of these fruits and vegetables helps sustain the livelihoods of our local farmers.

But as the years have gone on, I’ve watched this anticipated cadence change. The changes are best shown through emails sent by the farmers market manager to all of us volunteers. Her words help illustrate the intense farming challenges that are the result of increasing climate disruption. Last July, the market manager wrote to us:

*It has been a tough year with all the rain for our farmers and it looks like this wet summer is going to carry over into fall... Rain and lower than normal produce and worse tasteless produce has impacted the market as a whole.*

*One farmer broke her ankle while trying to bail the mud from her fields. She has had over 15 inches of rain in the last month.*

*Another reports losing about 50% of the crops planted this season with four times the normal amount of rain.*

*One Georgia farmer said, “The ample rain turning quickly into saturation and finally, over saturation, has limited our sunshine, brought about ideal conditions for parasites, fungi, and diseases, made certain crops flavorless, and even caused devastating floods which wash away weeks of hard labor, topsoil, and the dollar value of anything planted in the path of the surging water.”*

These experiences are not isolated to farms in Georgia or the Southeast, but Georgia’s own role is massive. Georgia Power owns the first and third largest carbon polluters in the nation. The effect of pollution and climate disruption on farm yields is one drastic consequence of current carbon pollution in the United States, and it disproportionately impacts those who are tasked to feed their communities. I have witnessed it even over the past few years. For this and other reasons, the Clean Power Plan is a crucial milestone in tackling climate disruption. It is our obligation as a community and as responsible citizens to advocate for strengthening the Clean Power Plan in three ways:

1. We should work toward a much larger carbon emission reduction goal (35-40% reductions below 2005 levels in 2020).
2. States should meet the new standards through renewable energy and efficiency because this is the fastest, cleanest, and most cost-effective path.
3. We must ensure that affected communities are engaged throughout the process, and that public resources are available to help workers and communities as they make the transition to a clean energy economy.

The Clean Power Plan is an important step but we can do better to motivate substantive change. Those who produce our food—and others—depend on it. Thank you for your attention.