July 29, 2014

My name is Kathleen Wells. I live in Denver. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today and to voice my support for the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) proposed Clean Power Plan to reduce carbon pollution from power plants. I am a psychologist, a retired university Professor, and a member of the Citizens' Climate Lobby, as well as other environmental organizations. I am not, however, representing any of these organizations at this meeting.

Over the past two days, speakers have addressed the deleterious and potentially catastrophic effects of carbon (and methane) pollution on the human and natural environment, advised how the scope of the EPA plan could be widened and the proposed standards could be raised, or suggested specific mechanisms through which the existing plan might be improved. Nearly all of the speakers I have heard supported the plan as a useful way in which at least to begin.

My purpose now is neither to repeat nor to expand upon any of the thoughtful points that have been made. My purpose is rather to highlight support for climate action from groups that have not been well-represented at this meeting: That is, Americans involved in communities of faith—this group, taken collectively, constitutes an over-whelming majority of Americans (http://religious.pewforum.org/reports: See Report 2: Religious Beliefs and Practices/Social & Political Views).

While I do not have evidence that the country’s faith communities would endorse the details of the Clean Power Plan, I do provide evidence, in the written material I have submitted, that these groups would endorse the spirit of the EPA’s plan. These communities are describing the climate crisis in moral terms and calling for strong action to care for the Creation, to protect the poor, and to promote inter-generational justice.

Religious groups and religious leaders have made explicit statements calling for immediate action to reduce the ecological threats we face. These groups include but are not limited to the following (http://fcnl.org/issues/energy/faith_statements_climate):

1. The Catholic Church (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI on Climate Change) (see also: http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/catholic-teachings/benedict-xvi/)

2. The Episcopal Church (see also: Unnumbered Resolution: The Episcopal Church Commits to Climate Justice for all God’s People and all God’s Creation, July 2012)

3. The National Association of Evangelicals (The Evangelical Climate Initiative)

4. The Southern Baptist Conference

5. The Presbyterian Church (USA)

6. The Religious Society of Friends (Friends Committee on National Legislation)

7. The Unitarian Universalist Association
8. The Central Conference of American Rabbis (Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism) and
9. The Dalai Lama (See also: http://www.ecobuddhism.org/bcp/all_content/350_hhd1/).

The July 2012 statement from the Episcopal Church is illustrative: "Resolved, That the 77th General
Convention calls on congregations, institutions, dioceses, and corporate offices of The Episcopal Church,
to work for the just transformation of the world's energy beyond and away from fossil fuels (including all
forms of oil, coal, and natural gas) and toward safe, sustainable, renewable, community controlled
energy, and that fossil fuel workers and their families be supported during the transition to a "post-
carbon" society."

Not surprisingly, such faith communities have banded together to form inter-faith groups that are
national in scope, groups such as The Call to Conscience on Climate Disruption; (This group helps
members of faith communities communicate the moral basis for climate action to political
representatives (http://citizensclimatelobby.org/resources/religious-resources/); Or, Interfaith Power
and Light, an organization whose mission is to promote energy conservation, energy efficiency, and
renewable energy (http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org).

The theoretical basis for inter-faith collaboration on ecological issues is being explored by groups such as
the Yale University Forum on Religion and Ecology (http://fore.research.yale.edu/about-us/), a forum
that is, in fact, spear-heading the development of a new academic field concerned with the religious
dimensions of the climate crisis.

All of these efforts contributed, no doubt, to the World Council of Churches position adopted this month
(July 2014) that encourages church communities to divest from fossil fuels

In conclusion: Faith communities, aided by dialogue, deliberation, and theory development, have
moved from statements of conscience, to inter-faith collaboration, to concerted action in the political
arena designed to address the climate crisis. This effort is growing and will expand.

Thank you for your work on this issue and your attention.