Public Hearings: Clean Power Plan Proposed Rule
Atlanta, GA

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

I agree with evidence that shows carbon dioxide and other global warming pollution endangers public health and welfare. I applaud the EPA for using its authority under the Clean Air Act to take action to protect us from the pollution that threatens public health and I urge you to move rapidly to finalize a strong rule designed to control carbon pollution from existing coal-fired and natural gas-fired power plants.

My comments will address two major issues that I know about from personal experience:

1. ARE WE CALCULATING THE TRUE COST OF BURNING COAL?
2. DOES ANYONE CALCULATE THE TRUE COST TO INDIVIDUALS who suffer from ILLNESSES exacerbated by the burning of carbon?

1: DO WE ACTUALLY CALCULATE THE “TRUE COST” OF BURNING COAL?
“Lower Cost” is often given as a reason for keeping Coal Fired Plants running my experience says we don’t actually calculate the cost to the community of burning coal, only the cost to the coal mining and coal transporting and coal burning companies.

As a Certified Public Accountant trained at the University of Michigan’s Graduate School of Business who earned an MBA in Accounting and then worked as an External Auditor, Internal Auditor, Controller and also taught cost accounting as an Assistant Professor of Accounting at several colleges, I can UNEQUIVOCALLY state, that many of the actual costs incurred by the people in our communities are not included in the spreadsheets that calculate the cost of burning coal and which are then used to compare the various forms energy production methods now available to us, especially here in the sunny South.

2: WHAT IS THE COST TO PEOPLE WHO SUFFER ILLNESSES MADE WORSE BY BURNING COAL?

A: COST TO COAL MINERS & Their FAMILIES.
I have also lived in Eastern Ohio, near the border of Western West VA where I taught coal miners how to earn a living in an office environment, as many were fearful of suffering badly in the mines and wanted a way out of them. I am telling you this as a way to let you know that I have personal experience with a population we often leave out of our cost calculations:

Early deaths of coal miners are a huge “cost” to their families. Are those calculated and included? Black Lung and accidents force early retirement and large medical bills for coal miners. Are these costs counted as part of the cost of getting coal out of the ground?
Then there are illnesses, like Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) that are made more deadly by the toxins that burning coal puts into the atmosphere.

I have a COPD disease called sarcoidosis. This is a disease caused by inflammation of the body and can affect any part of it. The most common body part affected is the lungs and when that happens it is called Pulmonary Sarcoidosis. I was diagnosed as having advanced stage lung cancer over 25 years ago. My pulmonologist said he needed to remove one of my lungs. Luckily, a Central American doctor in the operating room recognized my illness for what it was and cancelled the operation at the last minute and saved my lung. This illness makes me more sensitive to air quality conditions and actually forced me to leave yesterday’s rally for cleaner air after only 3 hours outdoors.

The effect on my breathing caused by the poor air quality in Atlanta was a major reason my wife and I decided we had to move out of the intown Atlanta neighborhood where we had lived for 25 years. This is the same neighborhood where my son’s family has lived in for 15 years, so we have been forced by the air to live too far apart to see each other each day. You tell me: What is the COST of having of a grandfather live 35 miles from his 3 grandsons and not be present in their everyday life? Nobody I know has even started to study that COST to families separated for this reason. Do you know anyone who is accounting for the cost to families forced to live apart because of polluted air?

By harnessing the power of the wind and the sun, we can reduce air (and water) pollution and transition to clean energy sources that don’t harm people and animals and which can create new safer jobs much closer to the people who use electric power. We will only succeed if we require all coal-fired power plants - America’s largest single source of pollution - and other big smokestack industries to stop polluting with impunity.

As a first step, please finalize your proposed carbon pollution rule to limit carbon and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from existing coal and natural gas plants.

Sincerely,

-- Free

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