EPA Public Hearing on Clean Power Plan Proposed Rule
July 29, 2014

My name is Lill Mood, and I am a retired public health nurse. I spent nearly 10 years of my 32 year public health career working in environmental protection programs as a liaison between the South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control and citizens who were concerned about environmental hazards and their effect on the health of children, families, and communities.

I had the privilege of chairing the Institute of Medicine study of Nursing, Health & Environment. (1998) The study reaffirmed that the nursing profession is rooted in the understanding that our environment is a primary determinant of health. Nurses have a heritage of facilitating good health and recovery from illness by paying attention to and modifying environmental conditions. The IOM study mapped a path forward for nurses to make a difference by addressing environmental risks as an integral part of practice, education, research and advocacy.

I am pleased to speak today on behalf of the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments (ANHE), a network of individual nurses and nursing organizations bonded in efforts to prevent and alleviate environmental hazards and conditions that contribute to ill health and loss of quality of life.

From our focus on individual patient health, we nurses have broadened our involvement to larger issues that impact the health of individuals, populations, and communities. There is no question of the scientific evidence that climate change is affecting all dimensions of human life, including health. From changing patterns of infection and allergies to new and evolving pathogens and toxic exposures, from devastating storms, floods, and droughts to loss of homes and jobs, people are reaping the consequences of carbon pollution and its widespread impact. We witness increased asthma from carbon emissions and health threats from pollution of water from coal mining and coal-fired power plants. We are active in searching out the specifics of health impacts due to chemical exposures from fracking used to recover natural gas as a solution to energy needs. We are drawn to sustainable energy sources without the downside of pollution, like solar and wind energy.

ANHE has put its effort into promoting individual and workplace practices that reduce our carbon footprint—clean energy, recycling, public transportation, walking and biking, growing and eating locally
grown foods—the multiple strategies that together add up to more than their simple sum, that have a multiplier effect on health.

Nursing is the largest health profession in number, and we are present in more workplaces that put us in contact with people than any other group of health professionals. Even those of us who are officially retired invest our time in disaster relief efforts, community improvement projects, free clinics, civic organizations, and advocacy initiatives. We also enjoy the amazing status of being the "most trusted profession" as determined over and over in an annual Gallup poll.

We are using our capacity to join with other health professionals and environmental colleagues, our elected officials and our community neighbors, to "bend the arc" of progress in reducing carbon pollution, in alleviating the existing effects of climate change, and in preventing further damage to our precious home, the earth.

We stand firmly in support of the EPA Clean Power Plan.
We ask that you listen to and help us find additional ways for the public to hear and heed our trusted voices as we work together on the issue of climate change. We urge you to stand firm and stand tall with us in the commitment to make this earth a safe place to live, work, and play.

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