Testimony of Ben Myers Before the Environmental Protection Agency
Regarding the Clean Power Plan

Atlanta, Georgia

July 30, 2014

Good afternoon. My name is Ben Myers. I am Director of Governmental and Political Affairs for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 613 in Atlanta, Georgia. On behalf of the approximately 4300 active members and retirees of Local 613, I thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the EPA’s Clean Power Plan.

Please know the majority of Local 613 members are construction electricians, linemen, and apprentices who are employed by electrical contractors throughout the Atlanta metropolitan area and northern Georgia. Local 613 also represents voice, data, and video technicians who work in the construction industry as well.

Coal has been good to the members of Local 613. Many of our members have been involved in the construction and maintenance of numerous coal-fired powerhouses in Georgia. Much like the operation of a coal-fired plant, the construction and maintenance of coal generation is labor-intensive as well.

Unfortunately, the Clean Power Plan imperils a good source of work for Local 613 members and threatens the reliability of our nation’s electrical grid. Nationally, EPA has stated the Clean Power Plan will lead to the closure of 41 to 49 gigawatts of coal-fired generating capacity by 2020. This will lead to the loss of 52,000 permanent, direct jobs and an additional 100,000 indirect jobs. In Georgia, the Clean Power Plan will close six plants that combined, currently produce 5,200 megawatts of electricity. The state will lose approximately 1300 direct and 2,500 indirect jobs. For Local 613 members the pain will be ongoing, for when these plants close any future maintenance and/or repair work will be lost forever.

In addition to lost employment, the Clean Power Plan will threaten the reliability of our nation’s electric grid. One need only look up north at the effects of last winter’s polar vortex. At its peak, during one of the coldest, snowiest winters on record PJM, a Regional Transmission Authority whose jurisdiction includes parts of the mid-Atlantic and eastern Midwestern states, had as little as 700 megawatts of reserve power. We know that compliance with the Mercury and Air Toxic Standard will close approximately 56 gigawatts of coal-fired generation. Add to that an additional 49 gigawatts from the Clean Power Plan and its clear the U.S. electric utility
sector may have a difficult time meeting the nation’s needs during a winter cold snap or summer heat wave.

For the loss of 3800 jobs in Georgia alone, Local 613 members have a reasonable expectation there will be a worthwhile drop in CO2 emissions. Unfortunately, that is not the case. For all the pain the Clean Power Plan will cause there will be almost no reduction in CO2 emissions. The problem is not with the United States. U.S. CO2 emissions have been flat for 24 years. The problem is with the rest of the world, where CO2 emissions have risen approximately 44 percent since 1990. Please see the graph included with my testimony. It is impossible for the United States to solve the world’s global warming problem on its own. Any meaningful attempt to address global greenhouse gas emissions must incorporate American’s trading partners, particularly China and India.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I respectfully suggest EPA reconsider the Clean Power Plan taking into account its significant negative impact to the economy and grid reliability.
U.S. and Global Carbon Emissions Projections
(million metric tons)