

**Environmental Defense Fund (Ben Levitan) Testimony for
EPA Public Hearing on Proposed Repeal of Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines for
Existing Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units
Charleston, WV
Tuesday, November 28, 2017**

My name is Ben Levitan. I'm a fourth-generation Kentuckian and an attorney at Environmental Defense Fund, a non-profit and non-partisan environmental organization with almost 9,800 members and supporters in West Virginia. I am respectfully speaking in support of the Clean Power Plan today because it will yield profound public health and environmental benefits for families and communities in all parts of the country, and improve the lives of millions of Americans.

We are deeply concerned that EPA is proposing its harmful repeal of this protection without providing Americans across the country an adequate opportunity to present their views. When EPA proposed the Clean Power Plan, it held four public hearings in different regions of the country, in addition to eleven public listening sessions that preceded the proposal. Before repealing the Clean Power Plan—and depriving Americans of its health and climate benefits—EPA owes the American people at least that level of outreach. The Clean Air Act requires EPA to provide a meaningful opportunity for public hearings as well.

Yet EPA has so far ignored requests for additional hearings that were filed on behalf of millions of Americans who would be directly affected by the proposed repeal of the Clean Power Plan, and who deserve the same chance to have their voices heard as those of us fortunate enough to be here today. These include requests from at least eight states and five cities, as well as dozens of organizations representing people and communities who are on the front lines of climate change and suffer from harmful power plant pollution on a daily basis. We urge EPA to respond to these requests by providing at least the same opportunity for public hearings that it provided when it was developing the Clean Power Plan.

Repealing the Clean Power Plan would be deeply harmful to the health and well-being of communities nationwide. EPA has a legal and moral responsibility to protect Americans from air pollution that destabilizes our climate and damages our health. But instead of fulfilling its obligation, EPA's proposal to repeal the Clean Power Plan—especially without committing to any meaningful replacement—would put more Americans in danger.

Just weeks ago, the Trump Administration released the latest Climate Science Special Report. This report is the product of years of work by many of America's top scientists, and all of its findings have survived rigorous fact-checking and peer review. Its conclusion is stark: climate change is accelerating, and the risks to America are growing more severe. And communities across the country are seeing these risks firsthand. In the last few months, lives were overturned by hurricanes in Texas, Puerto Rico, and Florida. Wildfires inflicted untold damage to lives, property and the environment across the West, from California to Montana. And of course, last year, tragic flooding hit right here in West Virginia. These are the kinds of events that are becoming more intense and frequent with climate change.

EPA's proposed repeal of the Clean Power Plan would also harm communities that are in the shadow of or downwind of high polluting power plants, costing thousands of American lives and increasing the risk of asthma attacks, heart attacks, and other harmful health impacts for some of the most vulnerable Americans. EPA itself recognizes in the proposed rule that repealing the Clean Power Plan could lead to as many as 4,500 additional deaths from air pollution each year, as well as 90,000 additional childhood asthma attacks and hundreds of thousands of lost school and work days. A recent [study](#) showed that Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia would see some of the largest health benefits from protections such as the Clean Power Plan – and would be most harmed by repeal.

The Clean Power Plan will also help leverage one of the most promising sources of new jobs and economic opportunities in America—clean energy. The United States clean energy sector is now a rapidly growing, \$200 billion industry employing more than 3 million people. These benefits are spread all across America. According to the [American Wind Energy Association](#), wind manufacturing jobs are now located in forty-three states. Seventy percent of wind farms are located in low-income counties. And wind developers pay \$222 million a year for leases to U.S. farmers, ranchers and other rural landowners.

Repealing the Clean Power Plan would threaten these opportunities - without yielding any benefits for coal communities. As market analysts have been saying for years, and as confirmed in a report issued by the Department of Energy in August of this year, coal-fired power generation and coal mining jobs have been declining primarily because of market forces including competition from low-cost natural gas and increased automation – not climate and clean air protections.

These trends have taken a significant and personal toll on communities throughout West Virginia, my home state of Kentucky, and other coal-intensive states. But the Clean Power Plan didn't cause these problems, and repealing the Clean Power Plan won't solve them. Rather than tear down climate and clean air protections that benefit all Americans, we need to find real solutions that ensure the clean energy economy brings jobs and economic prosperity to coal communities. All Americans – including Americans living in coal-producing regions – deserve to enjoy healthier air and a safer climate, and to share in the benefits of the clean energy economy.

Thank you for letting me speak today in support of preserving the Clean Power Plan. Again, we urge EPA to hold more hearings so that more Americans can share their views.