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US Climate Action Network
Testimony at EPA Public Hearing in Washington, DC

Proposed Carbon Pollution Standard for New Power Plants
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This testimony is from Peter Bahouth, Executive Director of the US Climate Action Network. I am Lara Levison, Program Director and Domestic Policy Director USCAN, and I'm presenting the testimony on Mr. Bahouth's behalf.

I am here to express the support of USCAN and its member groups for the proposed Carbon Pollution Standard for New Power Plants. This proposed rule takes an important step forward at the federal level to reduce US greenhouse gas emissions that are contributing significantly to global climate change.

The US Climate Action Network is the largest US network of organizations focused on climate change, with over 85 member groups. Our purpose is to support and help coordinate these organizations' efforts towards effective, equitable, and sustainable strategies to reduce carbon pollution and promote a clean energy future at all levels of the debate: local, state, federal and international.

USCAN is also an affiliate of the Climate Action Network (CAN-International), a worldwide network of more than 700 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in more than 90 countries working to promote government, private sector and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels.

USCAN's members include a wide range of non-profit organizations whose individual members represent a broad spectrum of Americans. Many of our member groups focus on climate change specifically, or environmental issues more broadly; these include state, regional, national, and global organizations.

Because climate change will affect—and is already affecting—so many aspects of society, organizations representing *many* interests and constituencies belong to USCAN's network as well, including groups focused on the following topics: health, civil rights, faith, business, animal welfare, international development, energy efficiency, affordable energy, renewable energy, environmental justice, think tank research, green jobs, sportsmen and anglers, wildlife, sustainable transportation, and science. A list of USCAN's members is included at the end of this testimony.

The proposed Carbon Pollution Standard is relevant to Americans' day-to-day concerns about the health of our families and the state of the economy. Limiting industrial carbon pollution from new power plants is critical to protecting the health of our children and families. Doctors, nurses, scientists, and other experts note that carbon pollution is dangerous for children because rising temperatures caused by climate change is likely to make smog pollution worse, which will trigger asthma attacks and permanently damage children's lungs. Seniors are also particularly susceptible to the dangers of air pollution.

Regarding the economy, cleaning up carbon pollution will spark innovation in clean technologies and create American jobs to manufacture, install, and operate these technologies. According to a February 2012 report by the Economic Policy Institute, modernizing coal and industrial power plants will create jobs. A March 2012 study by the Department of Labor estimated that the transition to cleaner energy and technology has already created 3.1 million jobs, and as we move from old power plants to new ones that rely on clean technology, we will create even more jobs.

Again, the proposed carbon pollution rule is important in relation to topics that Americans think about every day and recognize as relevant to our daily lives, namely the health of our families and the strength of the US economy.

The rule is also critically important from a longer-term perspective. USCAN's members recognize that climate change is already reshaping lives and our planet in myriad ways, and that we must seize the opportunities we have now to reduce carbon pollution and slow down global warming.

The "Copenhagen Accord" that resulted from the international climate conference in December 2009 recognized that greenhouse gases in the atmosphere should be stabilized at a level that would keep the increase in global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius to prevent dangerous changes to the climate.

Just last week, the chief economist for the International Energy Agency, Fatih Birol, warned that it is becoming increasingly unlikely that we will be able to keep the increase in global temperatures below 2 degrees Celsius in this century. "What I see now with existing investments for plants under construction...we are seeing the door for a 2 degree Celsius target about to be closed and closed forever," said the International Energy Agency's Dr. Birol. "This door is getting slimmer and slimmer in terms of physical and economic possibility." According to the IEA, this is because such a large amount of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions is already locked in by existing power plants, factories, buildings, and other infrastructure.¹

The evidence of climate change is becoming harder to ignore, as we witness unusual bouts of extreme weather and record warm temperatures. The past 12 months, from May 2011 to April 2012, was the warmest 12-month period on record in the contiguous United

¹ International Energy Agency press release, "The world is locking itself into an unsustainable energy future which would have far-reaching consequences, IEA warns in its latest World Energy Outlook," London, November 9, 2012.

States since record keeping began. Those 12 months also included the second hottest summer, the fourth hottest winter, and the hottest March.²

And Americans are noticing. They are making the connection between extreme weather and climate change. According to a March 2012 poll,³ 82 percent of Americans report that they were affected by one or more extreme weather event or disaster in the last year. In response to the statement, “global warming is affecting the weather in the US,” 70 percent agreed strongly or somewhat.

We *must* move forward at the local, state, national, and international levels to slow down climate change. The carbon pollution rule for new power plants is a step in the right direction at the national level for the US. Some of USCAN’s groups see it as a significant step; others see it as a very insufficient step, but all agree that it is a step forward, and that EPA should move swiftly to cover existing power plants as well.

Thus far, more than one million comments have been submitted to EPA in support of the proposed Carbon Pollution Standard for New Power Plants. Thank you for the opportunity for the US Climate Action Network to join our voice with citizens around the country in support of curbing carbon pollution to protect public health, create clean and green jobs, and slow down dangerous climate change.

USCAN Member Organizations

350.org
ActionAid USA
Alliance for Affordable Energy
Alliance to Save Energy (ASE)
Avaaz
CARE USA
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Clean Air Policy
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
Ceres
Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN)
Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture)
Clean Air-Cool Planet
Clean Water Action
Climate Protection Campaign
Climate Solutions
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL)

² National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Climatic Data Center, “State of the Climate National Overview, April 2012,” <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/national/2012/4>.

³ Yale and George Mason University

Conservation International
Conservation Law Foundation
EarthDay Network
Earthjustice
Ecoequity
Education for Global Warming Solutions
Emmett Center on Climate Change and the Environment *
Energy Action Coalition
Environment Action Association
Environment America
Environment Northeast (ENE)
Environmental & Energy Study Institute (EESI)
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Investigation Agency
Environmental Law & Policy Center (ELPC)
FHI 360
Fresh Energy
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of the Earth (FoE)
Georgetown Climate Center *
Green For All
Greenpeace
Humane Society International (HSI)
ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability
InterAction
International Environmental Law Project (IELP) at Lewis and Clark Law School *
International Forum on Globalization
International Rivers
IPS/Sustainable Energy & Economy Network (SEEN)
Kyoto USA
League of Conservation Voters
Massachusetts Climate Action Network
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
National Audubon Society
National Wildlife Federation (NWF)
Natural Resources Defense Council
North Carolina Conservation Network
Oil Change International
Oregon Environmental Council
Oxfam America
Pace Energy and Climate Center
Pacific Environment
Pew Environment Group

Physicians for Social Responsibility
Population Action International
Presbyterian Church USA
Rainforest Action Network
Refugees International
Sierra Club
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE)
Sustain US
The Climate Reality Project
The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
The Regeneration Project / Interfaith Power & Light
The Resource Innovation Group (TRIG)
The Wilderness Society
Transportation for America
U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)
Union of Concerned Scientists
Voices for Progress
WEDO
Will Steger Foundation
Woods Hole Research Center
World Resources Institute (WRI) *
World Wildlife Fund
Worldwatch Institute

Member organizations marked with an asterisk (*) are associate members of USCAN.
Associate member organizations are not associated with any USCAN policy positions.