



New York City Environmental Justice Alliance comments regarding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's proposed repeal of the Clean Power Plan

My name is Kartik Amarnath and I am here to testify on behalf of the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA). NYC-EJA is a non-profit citywide alliance linking grassroots organizations from low-income neighborhoods and communities of color in their struggle for environmental justice. NYC-EJA empowers its member organizations to advocate for improved environmental conditions and against inequitable environmental burdens. As champions of environmental justice advocacy, we would like to thank Attorney General Schneiderman, Mayor De Blasio, Councilmember Constantinides, and The New School for convening this 'People's Hearing' on the Clean Power Plan in light of the Trump administration's unwillingness to hold hearings accessible to New Yorkers and other stakeholders across the Northeast.

The environmental and climate justice movement has had deep concerns with the original Clean Power Plan (CPP). These concerns ranged from an overreliance of schemes similar to cap-and-trade, to recognizing certain types of waste incineration as compliant with emissions reductions goals. The Clean Power Plan's many shortcomings – voiced by frontline communities since it was originally proposed – are significant. However, we never advocated for a total repeal of the only federal policy that upholds our commitments to the Paris Agreement by requiring greenhouse gas reductions from power plants – one of our country's largest sources of emissions. According to a recent study whose simulations were reviewed by the U.S. Department of Energy's own national laboratories, a repeal of the Clean Power Plan would cost the national economy \$600 billion and lead to an estimated 120,000 premature deaths.¹ Since low-income communities and communities of color disproportionately live in close proximity to power plants and other polluting infrastructure, these deaths will unjustly be concentrated in the communities that our movement is committed to serving. It is about time that political leadership across the nation accounts for the decades of historic environmental burdens that have disproportionately harmed low-income communities and communities of color. Rather than a repeal of the CPP, regulations must incorporate aggressive climate goals and ensure a just transition to a regenerative economy.

While New York State would presumably reach CPP compliance due in part to a changing energy landscape and our participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, we must push for aggressive climate action that reflects the urgency of our collective crisis. To this regard, we would like to convey our gratitude to Attorney General Schneiderman for supporting the statewide New York Renews coalition since its inception, and for formally supporting our coalition's innovative polluter fee, which provides a mechanism for our State to achieve a just transition and be a national leader in the fight for climate justice. New York State must set an example by supporting clean, renewable energy that protects the health of our families and creates new jobs while holding corporations accountable for the pollution they dump into our air. While this President's administration would rather give handouts to dirty and dying industries like coal, the New York Renews polluter fee would generate about \$7 billion annually to invest in transitioning to renewable energy, growing New York's economy, and uplifting communities statewide.

For a quarter-century, the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance has fought to support communities in their struggles for environmental justice. No matter the odds, we will continue this fight by advocating for aggressive and equitable climate action at all levels of government. We have taken this President to court before, and we will continue to challenge the violence of this administration's polluting agenda on all fronts. Thank you.

¹ Rissman, Jeffrey. "Clean Power Plan Repeal Would Cost America \$600 Billion, Cause 120,000 Premature Deaths." *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 23 Feb. 2017, www.forbes.com/sites/energyinnovation/2017/02/23/clean-power-plan-repeal-would-cost-america-600-billion-cause-120000-premature-deaths/#2425265e3b78.