

## Legislative Talking Points Clean Power Plan and Ozone Rule



<p><b>Problem:</b></p> <p>Burning coal and other dirty fossil fuels is polluting our air and our water, and dangerously destabilizing our climate.</p> <p>Air pollution and climate change are harming our health now – through asthma, lung and heart disease, heat waves, violent storms, wildfires, and infectious diseases. It will worsen if we don't take effective steps to <u>protect</u> ourselves.</p>	<p><b>So what?</b></p> <p>Anyone and everyone's health can be harmed by climate change. But the people whose health is likely to be hurt first, and worst, are our nation's infants and children, older adults, people who already have a chronic health condition, people who work outdoors, and the poorest Americans.</p>
<p><b>Issue:</b></p> <p>More than 97% of climate scientists have concluded that human-caused climate change is happening, and research has proven that it is already harming the health of Americans. As a health professional, I have a <u>duty to protect</u> people from further harm by taking steps to address climate change.</p>	
<p><b>Benefits?</b></p> <p>The sooner we take steps to protect ourselves, the sooner every U.S. family, community and business will benefit from cleaner air &amp; water, better health, lower health care costs, and stronger communities.</p> <p>A useful way to think about it: What's good for our climate is good for our health, and what's good for our health is good for our climate.</p>	<p><b>Solutions?</b></p> <p>We need to fully implement America's Clean Power Plan. Doing so will reduce carbon pollution and help limit climate change. It will also create immediate health benefits for everyone by reducing soot- and smog-causing pollution.</p> <p>[Every/Our] state should be jumping at the opportunity to protect our citizens' health by replacing dirty fossil fuels with clean renewable energy and energy efficiency. <u>Protecting</u> ourselves from the health effects of climate change is the right thing to do – and the smart thing to do.</p>

Supporting language/points:

### **Burning dirty fossil fuels is polluting our air and our water.**

(Pick 1 or 2 of these points. If you can, tell a personal story if you or your patients live downwind from a coal-burning power plant, are impacted by air pollution, coal ash, or other fossil fuel impacts.)

- Burning fossil fuels emits small air-borne particles, nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide pollution which contribute to four of the five leading causes of death in the U.S. (heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease).
- 4 in 10 Americans live in areas with unsafe levels of this air pollution.
- Coal burning power plants are also the leading cause of mercury pollution, which is highly toxic to the brain, contributes to autism and reduced intelligence (loss of IQ).
- In 2005 alone, the cost of health harms to Americans from air pollution caused by coal-burning power plants was \$62 billion.

**Mining and burning fossil fuels emits gasses that trap heat, dangerously destabilizing our climate and harming our health.** (Tell a story about a patient or family member who was impacted by climate change—use one of the following examples or info from the lectures yesterday.)

HEAT: Explain the causation. *“One way that climate change harms people’s health is by increasing the frequency and intensity of heat waves. Heat waves can harm and even kill people, especially young children, older adults, and people who have chronic illnesses. Other people especially vulnerable to heat stroke are people who don’t have air conditioned homes, who work outdoors, the homeless, and people who exercise outdoors, like students, athletes and military recruits.”* Now discuss one or two heat effects that affect your state and **Tell a story about a patient or family member whose health was harmed by climate change.**

GROUND-LEVEL OZONE. *“Higher temperatures tend to produce more harmful air pollution, including ground-level ozone (smog), which forms when several pollutants combine in the presence of heat. Children are particularly vulnerable to ozone because their lungs are very sensitive and can be damaged for a lifetime by breathing too much smoggy air. It is also particularly dangerous for people with asthma and other lung diseases, and heart disease, because exposure to smog can make all of these disease worse, sometimes even fatal.”*

POLLEN. *“Longer warm seasons often lead to longer and more severe pollen seasons – which can make people’s asthma and allergies worse, causing many children to miss school and many adults to miss work.”*

EXPANDED RANGES FOR INSECT-BORNE AND WATERBORNE DISEASES. *“Rising temperatures contribute to expanded ranges for...”* (choose examples from your area: Lyme disease, algae blooms in Lake Erie, Red tide in the ocean...)

EXTREME WEATHER IS DANGEROUS. *“Climate change brings more extreme weather, which led to 21 disasters in 2012 and 2013 in the U.S. that cost over \$1 billion each. Besides storms and flooding, we’re facing hot, dry conditions that contribute to wildfires, causing dangerous particulate air pollution. 15,000 people are fighting fires in California alone at cost over \$1 billion. Climate change-induced droughts affect food supply and contribute to conflict and displacement of populations, with serious world consequences, as in Syria.”*

**SOLUTIONS: We need to fully implement America’s CLEAN POWER PLAN. Doing so will reduce heat-trapping gases and help limit climate change. It will also create immediate health benefits for everyone by reducing soot- and smog-causing pollution.**

**Our state should be jumping at the opportunity to protect our citizens’ health by replacing dirty fossil fuels with clean renewable energy and energy efficiency. Protecting ourselves from the health effects of climate change is the right thing to do – and the smart thing to do.**

- Clean energy produces electricity without pollution.
- Energy efficiency saves money -- especially helpful to low-income families. EPA estimates average electric bills will drop by \$7 in 2030 due to efficiency investments.
- In 2014 there were 173,000 solar workers in the U.S. and 73,000 wind workers. That’s 40% more clean energy jobs more than all the coal workers in the U.S. (80,000 miners, 31,000 in transportation and 60,000 in coal plants).
- The Clean Power Plan encourages the states to take initiatives and develop clean, local clean-energy jobs.
  - The Clean Power Plan makes economic sense, too. By 2030, the annual health cost savings from the CPP will be huge: \$12B to \$34 billion. Compare that to estimated compliance costs of \$5.1 to \$8.4 billion. The Clean Power Plan’s health savings far outweigh the costs.

## Potential Asks for Legislative Visits

### Clean Power Plan:

Moderate Ask:

Would you be willing to put out a statement acknowledging the impacts of climate change on public health?

Would you be willing to put out a statement on the public health benefits of clean energy?

The Clean Power Plan is an incredibly important step towards curbing dangerous carbon. We ask that you vote against all legislative attacks on the Clean Power Plan.

Conservative Ask: We understand that we may disagree on the mechanisms to reduce carbon pollution. We ask that you not co-sponsor legislation that would block the Clean Power Plan.

Champion Asks: Would you be willing to host a briefing on climate and health with health professionals? Would you be willing to write an op-ed about the impacts of climate change on health and the benefits of the Clean Power Plan? Would you be willing to make a floor speech on the importance of protecting public health from the impacts of climate change?

### Asks for Ozone Rule

**As health professionals we are sworn to protect health and lives and are asking you to protect the laws and programs that protect us all: Support for the Clean Air Act and the Ozone Rule.**

- Too many Americans live where the air is dirty and dangerous to health – and they have no choice but to breathe it. As a health professional, I have a duty to protect people from this harm by supporting the Clean Air Act and the Ozone Rule.
- Under the Clean Air Act since 1970, our country has achieved cleaner, healthier air (68% reduction in 6 common pollutants) while the economy has grown (GDP up 234%) The benefits outweighed the cost in over 40 years by \$1.3 trillion in savings to \$20 billion in costs. (EPA)

Moderate Ask: A new ozone standard will be released in a few weeks. If it is challenged in Congress, would you be willing to vote to sustain the EPA's ability to protect us from ozone pollution?

Conservative Ask: Would you oppose legislation that undercuts the Clean Air act?

Champion Ask: Would you be willing to host a roundtable on the health impacts of ozone?

Would you be willing to write an op-ed on the importance of reducing ozone levels for children's health?