June 25, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Lisa Jackson, Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
Room 3000, Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20460


Dear President Obama and Administrator Jackson:

We, the undersigned groups, on behalf of our millions of members and supporters across the nation, write today to express our strong support for the establishment of protective carbon pollution standards for new power plants issued under the nation’s clean air laws. We urge you to finalize these standards as soon as possible and to move swiftly to propose and finalize carbon pollution standards for existing power plants. The carbon pollution standards should ensure that new power plants use the most efficient, lowest-emitting technologies and that emissions from existing power plants are reduced by the amounts that science demands. This goal is achievable because of the availability of cost-effective technologies that are produced in America and create American jobs.

The need to curb climate destabilizing pollution from power plants is urgent. The new source carbon pollution standards are a vitally important step towards accomplishing this critical task.

In December of 2009 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) concluded—after reviewing a comprehensive and massive body of peer-reviewed scientific research on climate change—that heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health and welfare of both current and future generations.\(^1\) Due to human activities—primarily the combustion of fossil fuels and deforestation—the concentration of these gases in the atmosphere is rapidly rising. Atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO\(_2\)) levels have increased by approximately 38% since the Industrial Revolution; current atmospheric

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concentrations of both CO$_2$ and methane (an even more potent greenhouse gas) are significantly higher than they have been for the last 800,000 years.\(^2\)

**800,000 Year Record of Carbon Dioxide Concentration**

This chart shows CO$_2$ concentrations in the atmosphere over the last 800,000 years, based upon analyzing air bubbles trapped in an Antarctic ice core. It also shows that unless we curb greenhouse gas emissions atmospheric CO$_2$ concentrations will likely double or triple by the end of this century.\(^3\)

The increase in the amount of solar radiation that is trapped in the earth’s atmosphere is causing average global temperatures to rise. Global temperature records independently assembled by NOAA, NASA, and the United Kingdom’s Hadley Center indicate that global mean surface temperatures have risen by 1.3 ± 0.32°F over the past 100 years (1906-2005), with the greatest warming occurring during the past 30 years.\(^4\)

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\(^3\) U.S. Global Change Research Program, supra note 2, at 13.

Climate change presents severe risks to the health and well-being of Americans. If carbon pollution is unchecked, the economic and welfare costs of intensifying climate impacts will be profound.

The United States Global Change Research Program has determined that if carbon pollution emissions are not reduced it is likely that American communities will experience increasingly severe and costly climate impacts, including:

- Rising levels of dangerous smog in cities—which will lead to an increased risk of respiratory infections, more asthma attacks, and more premature deaths;
- Increased risk of illness and death due to extreme heat;
- More intense hurricanes and storm surges;
- Increased frequency and severity of flooding;
- Increases in insect pests and in the prevalence of diseases transmitted by food, water, and insects;
- Reduced precipitation and runoff in the arid West;
- Reduced crop yields and livestock productivity; and
- More wildfires and increasingly frequent and severe droughts in some regions.5

Climate science indicates that it is necessary to make deep cuts in the amount of carbon pollution emitted—which will require major reductions in power sector emissions.

The National Research Council’s 2011 report on climate stabilization concurs that steep emission reductions, on the order of 80% globally, are necessary to stop CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere from reaching dangerous levels.6 Cutting emissions from the power sector will be a necessary component of these emissions cuts, as the U.S. power sector is responsible for approximately 40% of U.S. carbon emissions7 and 7% of global greenhouse gas emissions.8

America has the resources and the technologies needed to sharply reduce power sector carbon pollution.

The standards should ensure that new power plants use the most efficient, lowest-emitting technology available, and reflect the emission rates achievable by state-of-the-art combined cycle natural gas plants. Standards issued for existing power plants should achieve the pace and scope of emission reductions that science demands and that proven, cost-effective technologies readily enable.

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5 U.S. GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH PROGRAM, supra note 2, at 8-109.
Carbon pollution standards for new and existing power plants will further the progress we are making towards a cleaner, more secure, and more independent future for energy in America. These standards can ensure that we will use our nation’s electricity resources more efficiently to cut energy costs for American families and businesses, mobilize American innovation, technologies, and fuels for cleaner energy generation, and ensure that America is at the cutting edge of the clean energy economy of the future.

Sincerely,

Citizens for Pennsylvania’s Future (PennFuture)
Clean Air Task Force
Clean Water Action
Climate Solutions
Conservation Law Foundation
Earthjustice
Environment America
Environment Northeast
Environmental Defense Fund
Greenpeace USA
Health Care Without Harm
Interfaith Power and Light, The Regeneration Project
League of Conservation Voters
Moms Clean Air Force
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
New Jersey Audubon
NW Energy Coalition
Oregon Environmental Council
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Powder River Basin Resource Council
Renewable Northwest Project
Safe Climate Campaign
Sierra Club
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
The Center for the Celebration of Creation
The Climate Reality Project
US Climate Action Network
Washington Environmental Council
Western Environmental Law Center
Western Resource Advocates
WildEarth Guardians