

## **NRDC MEMO: HOW SEN. PORTMAN IS PROTECTING BIG POLLUTERS INSTEAD OF OHIO'S CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

Senator Rob Portman is spearheading legislation in Congress to let Ohio's power plants keep dumping unlimited carbon pollution into our air. He recently introduced an amendment (#679) to the Senate Budget Resolution that would dismantle Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Power Plan to set the first-ever limits on carbon pollution from power plants.

Carbon pollution is the major cause of catastrophic climate change, which endangers public health and damages Ohio's economy. Cutting carbon pollution as the EPA has proposed would also cut soot and smog pollution that trigger asthma attacks. The Clean Power Plan will lead to money-saving investments in energy efficiency for homes and businesses, and create clean energy jobs.

Under current law, states have the first shot at writing a state plan to reduce carbon pollution from its power plants to meet federal targets. But if a state doesn't write its own clean air plan, the Clean Air Act requires EPA to regulate the state's power plants directly.

Sen. Portman's measure would make the Clean Air Act *optional*.<sup>i</sup> A state could "opt out" simply by declaring that meeting carbon standards *would cost the polluters money* – that compliance would “impair investments in existing electric generating capacity.” Under Portman's amendment, EPA would no longer be allowed to step in with federal pollution limits if a state chooses not to act.

By repealing the national guarantee that makes the Clean Air Act work, Portman's proposal would take us back fifty years to the dark days when polluters could play states off against each other – when there were no national rules to level the playing field and there was no federal back-up when states failed to act.

Here are the effects of Senator Portman's actions on Ohio:

### PORTMAN'S PROPOSAL WOULD HURT THE HEALTH OF OHIO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN:

Cutting carbon pollution from power plants would have immediate and long-term health benefits:

- Carbon pollution standards for power plants could save 2,800 lives and prevent 760 hospitalizations in Ohio from 2020-2030<sup>ii</sup>, according to a 2014 analysis by the Harvard School of Public Health.
- Nearly two million Ohioans suffer from asthma and other chronic respiratory diseases,<sup>iii</sup> including 270,000 asthmatic children in 2013.<sup>iv</sup> Over 25,000 asthmatic Ohio children had

to be rushed to the emergency room in 2008.<sup>v</sup>

Climate change, driven by rising carbon pollution, leads to higher concentrations of ground-level ozone, or the pollutant smog, which aggravates asthma and other respiratory ailments.<sup>vi</sup> Nineteen counties surrounding or near Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Columbus all have ozone levels that exceed EPA standards.<sup>vii</sup>

- Those who suffer from asthma and respiratory diseases are not the only ones at risk. The elderly, children and people in economically disadvantaged communities face particularly acute risks from air pollution even if they don't also suffer from asthma or other respiratory diseases but such illnesses tend to be over-represented in such populations. Ohio has:
  - 2.6 million children
  - More than 1.7 million people who are at least 65 years old
  - 1.8 million people of low income.<sup>viii</sup>
- Extreme heat and heat waves lead to increased illness and death. In fact, Ohio's four most populous cities could see heat-related deaths increase by 70 % to 120 % by the 2080s.<sup>ix</sup>
- Heavy-precipitation events, which are made more likely by climate change, are already on the rise in the United States, and their frequency and magnitude are expected to increase in the years to come.
  - Extreme rainfall events have become 49 % more frequent in Ohio over the past 60 years.<sup>x</sup> These heavy rains not only increase the risk of flooding, the second deadliest of all weather-related hazards in the nation, but can also lead to drinking water contamination and disease outbreaks.
  - People in the Toledo area experience this firsthand in August 2014, when the public water system became unsafe thanks to an enormous algal bloom. The "do not drink" advisory from August 2 to August 4 affected some 500,000 citizens.<sup>xi</sup>

#### PORTMAN'S PROPOSAL IGNORES THE FACT THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS ALREADY COSTING OHIOANS

- Ohioans paid an estimated \$4.2 billion or about \$1,100 per taxpayer in federal taxes for recovery from extreme weather events in 2012 alone.<sup>xii</sup>

#### PORTMAN'S PROPOSAL WOULD HALT ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF CURBING CLIMATE CHANGE

NRDC's analysis finds that with a strong reliance on energy efficiency, Ohio could achieve even greater reductions than the EPA's proposal calls for, with the following economic benefits<sup>xiii</sup>:

- 8,600 new energy efficiency jobs.

- \$903 million in savings on electric bills in 2020, with savings for households and businesses:
  - Out of that total, Ohio households save \$399 million , while
  - Ohio businesses would save \$504 million.

Ohio’s clean energy policies and growing energy efficiency and renewable energy industries have provided big benefits to the state including:

- \$230 million in energy bill savings for homeowners and businesses<sup>xiv</sup>;
- Nearly 24, 000 new jobs in research and development, manufacturing, construction, engineering, administration and other fields<sup>xv</sup>;
- \$600 million in new investments in the state’s economy<sup>xvi</sup>.

### PORTMAN’S PROPOSAL GOES AGAINST THE WISHES OF OHIOANS, LEADING HEALTH & BUSINESS GROUPS

- A recent bipartisan [poll](#) shows that 84% of Ohioans support Ohio developing a plan to meet the EPA carbon limits – and that support includes 87% of Republicans and 80% of Independents.<sup>xvii</sup> Under Portman’s proposal, however, state leaders could choose to do no plan at all.
- An impressive array of small businesses, Fortune 500 firms, and major investors support the Clean Power Plan, including the Business Roundtable {really?}, Small Business Majority, Environmental Entrepreneurs, the American Sustainable Business Council, the Business Council for Sustainable Energy, Advanced Energy Economy, American Wind Energy Association, and the SolarEnergy Industries Association.
- Health groups warmly welcomed the standards, including the American Lung Association, the American Public Health Association, the National Hispanic Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Thoracic Society.

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<sup>i</sup> David Doniger, “GOP Launches Brazen Bid to Give Carbon Polluters Free Rein,” blog post accessed April 7, 2015, from

[http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/ddoniger/gop\\_launches\\_brazen\\_bid\\_to\\_giv.html](http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/ddoniger/gop_launches_brazen_bid_to_giv.html).

<sup>ii</sup> Schwartz, Joel, et al. “Health Co-Benefits of Carbon Standards for Existing Power Plants.” Harvard School of Public Health, Syracuse University, Boston University, 2014.

<http://www.chgharvard.org/resource/health-co-benefits-carbon-standards-existing-power-plants>. via NRDC’s “Climate and Health in Ohio” Fact Sheet.

<sup>iii</sup> Schwartz, Joel, et al. “Health Co-Benefits of Carbon Standards for Existing Power Plants.” Harvard School of Public Health, Syracuse University, Boston University, 2014.

<http://www.chgharvard.org/resource/health-co-benefits-carbon-standards-existing-power-plants>. via NRDC’s “Climate and Health in Ohio” Fact Sheet.

<sup>iv</sup> American Lung Association, Estimated Prevalence and Incidence of Lung Disease, April 2013, [www.lung.org/finding-cures/our-research/trendreports/estimated-prevalence.pdf](http://www.lung.org/finding-cures/our-research/trendreports/estimated-prevalence.pdf).

<sup>v</sup> [http://noharm.org/lib/downloads/climate/Economic\\_Affliction\\_of\\_Asthma.pdf](http://noharm.org/lib/downloads/climate/Economic_Affliction_of_Asthma.pdf)

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- <sup>vi</sup> NRDC, Sneezing and Wheezing: How Global Warming Could Increase Ragweed Allergies, Air Pollution and Asthma, October 2007, [www.nrdc.org/globalwarming/sneezing/contents.asp](http://www.nrdc.org/globalwarming/sneezing/contents.asp).
- <sup>vii</sup> Environmental Protection Agency, "The Green Book Nonattainment Areas for Criteria Pollutants," 2014, [www.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/hnacs.html#OHIO](http://www.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/hnacs.html#OHIO). via NRDC's "Climate and Health in Ohio" Fact Sheet.
- <sup>viii</sup> American Lung Association. "State of the Air 2014, Report Card: Ohio," [www.stateoftheair.org/2014/states/ohio/](http://www.stateoftheair.org/2014/states/ohio/). via NRDC's "Climate and Health in Ohio" Fact Sheet.
- <sup>ix</sup> Petkova, E.P., et al. "Heat-related Mortality in a Warming Climate: Projections for 12 U.S. Cities." *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 11 (2014): 11371-11383. via NRDC's "Climate and Health in Ohio" Fact Sheet.
- <sup>x</sup> Madsen, t., and N. Willcox. *When It Rains It Pours: Global Warming and the Increase in Extreme Precipitation from 1948 to 2011*. environment america Research & Policy Center, 2012. via NRDC's "Climate and Health in Ohio" Fact Sheet. via NRDC's "Climate and Health in Ohio" Fact Sheet.
- <sup>xi</sup> Troy, Tom. "Mayor Collins Speaks on Toledo Water Crisis at Great Lakes Gathering," *Toledo Blade*, September 24, 2014, [www.toledoblade.com/local/2014/09/24/Mayor-Collins-speaks-on-toledo-water-crisis-at-Great-Lakes-gathering.html](http://www.toledoblade.com/local/2014/09/24/Mayor-Collins-speaks-on-toledo-water-crisis-at-Great-Lakes-gathering.html). via NRDC's "Climate and Health in Ohio" Fact Sheet.
- <sup>xii</sup> Natural Resources Defense Council. "Carbon Pollution Standards Fact Sheet Ohio." May, 2014. <http://www.nrdc.org/air/pollution-standards/files/cps-state-benefits-OH.pdf>
- <sup>xiii</sup> Natural Resources Defense Council. "Carbon Pollution Standards Fact Sheet Ohio." May, 2014. <http://www.nrdc.org/air/pollution-standards/files/cps-state-benefits-OH.pdf>
- <sup>xiv</sup> Ohio Advanced Energy Economy Institute, *Economic Analysis of Ohio's Renewable and Energy Efficiency Standards*, march 2013, [www.ohioadvancedenergy.org/4F1B6B80-cde8-11e2-933B000c-29ca3aF3](http://www.ohioadvancedenergy.org/4F1B6B80-cde8-11e2-933B000c-29ca3aF3). via NRDC's "Carbon Pollution Standards Fact Sheet Ohio."
- <sup>xv</sup> Mark Muro and Jonathan Rothwell, *Sizing the Clean Economy*, Brookings institution, July 2011, [www.brookings.edu/research/inter-actives/aggregate-clean-economy#/?ind=28&geo=1&vis=0&dt=1&z=0&x=0&y=0](http://www.brookings.edu/research/inter-actives/aggregate-clean-economy#/?ind=28&geo=1&vis=0&dt=1&z=0&x=0&y=0). via NRDC's "Carbon Pollution Standards Fact Sheet Ohio."
- <sup>xvi</sup> Community Renewable Energy, *Renewable Energy in the Mid-west: Part 1*, September 13, 2013, [communityrenewableenergynow.com/index.php/solar-power-in-the-midwest/](http://communityrenewableenergynow.com/index.php/solar-power-in-the-midwest/). via NRDC's "Carbon Pollution Standards Fact Sheet Ohio."
- <sup>xvii</sup> "Support for the Clean Power Plan and State Plans to Implement It," polling memo by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) and Public Opinion Strategies (POS). [http://docs.nrdc.org/legislation/files/leg\\_15031201a.pdf](http://docs.nrdc.org/legislation/files/leg_15031201a.pdf).