



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Joint Statement on EPA's Proposed Rules to Reduce Carbon Dioxide Emissions

**The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
and
The Episcopal Church**

Lutherans and Episcopalians collectively celebrate and support the release of the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed carbon rule for existing power plants. As faith traditions committed to the health, flourishing, and sanctity of human communities and God's creation, we believe that the carbon rule is a critical step toward safeguarding the lives and livelihood of future generations.

Recent reports outline the enormous impacts that climate change is already having on our world. Multi-year droughts, sea level rise, extreme weather events, and increased flooding dramatically affect communities internationally, from the Inupiat on the north slope of Alaska to Midwestern farming families to our brothers and sisters in the Philippines. We recognize with concern that climate change particularly harms low income communities that lack the resources and technology to adapt to rapid environmental changes.

These impacts are already affecting global agriculture, and with it, food supplies and prices. Ending hunger and alleviating global poverty are key concerns for our faith traditions. Yet our work faces the daunting and interconnected challenges of addressing hunger and poverty in a rapidly changing climate. Sustainable solutions must include both poverty alleviation and environmental conservation.

Power plants are the single largest source of carbon dioxide pollution in the United States and major contributors to climate change. These emissions not only threaten the environmental stability of our planet, but also the health of young children and their families, disproportionately affecting the poorest among us. Yet there are currently no limits on power plant emissions of greenhouse gases.

The carbon rule proposed this week will reduce the carbon dioxide output from existing power plants, setting a strong standard that will modernize our nation's power plants while limiting our contribution to global climate change. Reducing carbon emissions from power plants must be a top priority for the U.S. if we hope to prevent the worst impacts of climate change and ensure a just and sustainable world for our generation and those to come.

Our faith traditions teach us that no single person can be whole unless all have the opportunity for full and abundant life. That wholeness and collective well-being is only possible as a global community. We recognize our connections to fellow citizens and neighbors around the world who are already suffering from

the consequences of climate change, and acknowledge our responsibility to those yet unborn, who will either benefit from our efforts to curb carbon emissions or suffer from our failure to address this ethical imperative. We believe that addressing climate change is a moral obligation to our neighbors and to God's creation, so that all may enjoy full, healthy, and abundant lives.

The proposed carbon rule for existing power plants is the single largest step that we can take now to address the pressing issue of climate change. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Episcopal Church are eager to collaborate with the EPA and states across the nation to ensure that the carbon rule is implemented fairly, particularly for low-income consumers. We will continue to pray that all involved in this good work will be graced with vision, hope, and the search for truth as they seek to implement the carbon rule swiftly and effectively.

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