

OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

U.S. Energy Information Administration Report: Analysis of the Impacts of the EPA's Clean Power Plan
Joint Subcommittee Hearing

June 24, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for being here this morning.

EPA's Clean Power Plan, like the rest of President Obama's Climate Action Plan, is the bold step forward our nation needs to address the impacts of climate change. Severe drought, record temperatures, and an increase in heavy rain events are just a few examples of what Americans are confronting now and can expect to see more frequently in the coming years.

The scientific evidence confirms that we need to act now to lessen these impacts. Leaders in the faith community have also been calling on us to address climate change. The recently issued encyclical by Pope Francis notes that climate change "represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity" and that the poor will be disproportionately affected by its impacts. Pope Francis also states that "there is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced."

I hope that we, in Congress, will stop obstructing EPA's efforts and instead listen to our scientists, to our religious leaders, and the American people by supporting policies that will cut carbon pollution.

To that end, power plants are the largest source of carbon pollution, and cutting emissions from this sector will be the key to any solution. That is why I support the Clean Power Plan. It sets reasonable limits that take into account the characteristics of each state. It is based on strategies already in use such as improving energy efficiency and encouraging the deployment of renewables. And finally, it provides the states with flexibility. EPA is not prescribing a specific set of measures. States will choose what goes into their plans, and they can work alone or as part of a multi-state effort to achieve meaningful reductions.

Today we will be discussing the Energy Information Administration's analysis of the Clean Power Plan, and I suspect that some Members and witnesses will be making the same old argument that EPA regulations are killing the economy and jobs.

We know that this just isn't true, and it isn't what EIA's analysis shows. Rather, as history has shown us time and again, stricter pollution limits have invariably led to innovation and the creation of new technologies that end up creating jobs while protecting our environment. I am confident American industry will continue this record of innovation and job creation as new environmental standards like the Clean Power Plan are adopted.

The bottom line is that the costs and risks of inaction are too high for us to continue to drag our feet or put our heads in the sand. I'm looking forward to today's discussion and hearing more about how we achieve the carbon targets in the Clean Power Plan.

Thank you and I yield back the balance of my time.