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Faith Leaders Voice Support for Obama's Clean Power Plan

Congregations across country support historic effort to reduce carbon pollution

SAN FRANCISCO – Following today’s release of the Obama administration's final Clean Power Plan rule, which establishes the first-ever federal limits on carbon pollution from power plants, faith leaders across religions voiced strong support for the EPA’s plan to combat climate change.

“I applaud the EPA for moving forward with these landmark rules,” said the Rev. Canon Sally G. Bingham, president and founder of Interfaith Power & Light (IPL). “It’s an important step in addressing climate change, which is not just a matter of science or policy, but one of faith. Congregations across the country are responding to the moral obligation to care for creation, so I suspect faith communities will be a primary voice calling on their leaders in Congress to support this rule.”

In addition to placing limits on how much carbon can be emitted by power plants, the EPA’s Clean Power Plan encourages investments in clean energy and energy efficiency. The rule was initially proposed in June 2014 and is the crown jewel of President Barack Obama’s blueprint for addressing climate change.

The Clean Power Plan complements the work of faith communities around the country who are already cutting emissions through initiatives like IPL’s Paris Pledge and Cool Congregations program. With energy efficiency programs and a focus on switching to renewable power generation, IPL has helped green over 4,000 congregations in the past decade.

“We’ve seen congregations pick up this issue and run with it, with enormous success. Not only are they reducing their emissions, they’re able to save a lot of money through energy efficiency and build community in the process. If these congregations can do it on shoestring budgets, imagine what states and utilities can accomplish,” said the Rev. Bingham.

“The monumental importance of this rule cannot be overstated,” said the Rev. Richard Cizik, coordinator of Virginia IPL. “While naysayers waste time debating established climate science, people here in Virginia, around the country and across the world suffer countless impacts. We are intent on ensuring this rule is implemented expeditiously to protect vulnerable communities.”

“Pope Francis has stated that the gravity of the ecological crisis requires we all protect the common good, and reducing carbon pollution from power plants will safeguard common goods like air, water, land and community health for generations to come,” said Sr. Joan Brown, OSF, executive director of New Mexico Interfaith Power & Light. “Faith communities have been gathering comments and testifying in favor of this plan for years, because it’s a matter of climate justice and a historic step towards protecting all of God’s creation.”

IPL has worked alongside more than 18,000 congregations to help them cut emissions, save energy, and live more sustainably. “We’ll continue working across the country with our 40 state affiliates to garner support for this historic effort to clean up the nation’s dirtiest power plants,” added Rev. Bingham.

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