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**National Religious Organizations Praise Clean Power Plan**

*Diverse Faith Leaders Offer Moral Perspective on New Rule*

Washington, D.C. – National religious organizations and prominent faith leaders praised the new Clean Power Plan released by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as consistent with their moral obligation to care for God’s Creation and ensure that everyone has clean air and is protected from the impacts of climate change.

“A new national standard to reduce carbon pollution from existing power plants is an important step forward to protect the health of all people, especially children, the elderly, and poor and vulnerable communities, from harmful pollution and the impacts of climate change,” said Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami, in response to the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) announcement on August 3 of a new final rule limiting carbon pollution.

“In creating the first ever national standard for power plants, the rule will ensure that power plants reduce carbon pollution, soot, and other air pollutants that effect our health and contribute significantly to climate change,” said Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, Director of the Religious Action Center. “We believe that it is our responsibility to act as environmental stewards and partners with God in tilling and tending the earth, as humankind was commanded in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15).”

“We welcome the Administration’s initiative to work with state governments to provide various options for the reduction of carbon emissions and to build on the momentum toward less carbon reliance that already is taking hold in the U.S. Energy sector,” said Alexander Baumgarten, Director of Public Engagement and Mission Communication for The Episcopal Church. “The Episcopal Church as a whole has committed toward tangible action for the safeguarding of God’s creation, and we understand efforts to curb carbon emissions as an important step in ensuring the health and livelihood of future generations and our planet.”

“In his Encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, the Holy Father reminds us of our biblical call to live in right relationship and to cooperate with God’s design for our world,” said Joan Marie Steadman, CSC, Executive Director of The Leadership Conference of Women Religious. “When we choose lives of simplicity, hope, and love we honor God’s presence in our world; we grow closer to God and we build the community for generations to come.”

“Our faith communities are on the front lines of providing relief and aid to those who are bearing the unequal burden of climate change,” said Shantha Alonso, Executive Director of Creation Justice Ministries. “Now, with the Clean Power Plan, we have a chance to prevent suffering by

limiting a major contributor to climate change: carbon pollution. We urge every state to create a strong and effective state implementation plan that successfully meets carbon reduction targets -- without shifting costs to impoverished communities.”

“We applaud the Clean Power Plan announced today by the Environmental Protection Agency,” stated Chloe Schwabe, Faith Economy Ecology Director at the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. “Maryknoll missionaries, Catholic men and women, serve throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America in communities that already experience the impacts of climate change. This rule is a critical step towards alleviating the burden of climate change and environmental pollutants on the ‘least of these,’ and to meeting our nation’s INDC contribution necessary for a successful outcome at the U.N. climate talks in Paris.”

In a letter to President Obama last week, Rev. Mitch Hescox, President and CEO of the Evangelical Environmental Network stated, “The Clean Power Plan is an essential step, the most important one we will have made to date in overcoming climate change.”

“Our faith traditions teach us to care for the Earth and for each other, especially vulnerable populations,” said Cassandra Carmichael, Executive Director of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment. “The EPA’s plan is an unprecedented opportunity for us as a nation to reduce dangerous carbon pollution in our air and protect vulnerable communities and families.”

“No doubt the gravest issue of our time is the growing proliferation of carbon in our atmosphere and we have done little to stop it,” said Rabbi Steve Gutow, President of the Jewish Council of Public Affairs. “The Clean Power Plan is our moment. America’s moment to step up to the plate.”

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*The National Religious Partnership for the Environment is an association of independent faith groups across a broad spectrum: the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops along with its affiliated program arm the Catholic Climate Covenant, the National Council of Churches USA and its affiliate Creation Justice Ministries, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and its affiliate the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, and the Evangelical Environmental Network. Each Partner — drawing upon its distinctive traditions — is undertaking scholarship, leadership training, congregational and agency initiatives, and public policy education in service to environmental sustainability and justice.*