



# Interfaith Power & Light

A Religious Response to Global Warming

## Addressing Industrial Carbon Pollution: EPA Safeguards for Power Plants

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is moving forward to reduce carbon pollution from fossil fuel power plants and oil refineries, which produce nearly 40 percent of the global warming pollution in the United States. The newly proposed New Source Performance Standards, or more commonly, “Carbon Pollution Standards for New Power Plants,” were released in April 2012, received over three million supportive comments, and are set to be finalized this spring. Limits for existing plants are expected later this year. The new standards will ensure that all new power plants are built with the most modern pollution control technology available, significantly reduce the amount of carbon pollution emitted from their smokestacks, and stimulate new construction and utility jobs.

Despite being the nation’s single largest source of climate change-causing air pollution, there are currently no **limits on the amount of carbon pollution that can be released from power plant smokestacks** and this air pollution results in higher average temperatures, extreme weather, and serious impacts on human health and the environment.

The Carbon Pollution Standards for New Power Plants is a critical and historic step forward to directly address climate-changing pollution.

Specifically, the new standards will:

- Shift electricity generation to power plants using modern, less polluting technologies.
- Require new power plants to emit approximately 60% less carbon pollution than the average coal-fired power plant.
- Tackle a major contributor to dangerous levels of asthma-inducing smog.

## **Building on the Success of the Clean Air Act**

Passed by Congress with overwhelming bi-partisan support over 40 years ago, the Clean Air Act is part for our country's proud record of environmental protection. The EPA's new proposed carbon pollution limits are the result of directives from both the Supreme Court and Congress. In 2007, the Court confirmed in its landmark decision, *Massachusetts v. EPA*, that the Clean Air Act requires EPA to protect our public health and welfare from air pollutants – such as carbon pollution from power plants that contributes to climate change. And, in 2011, the Court restated this finding noting, “emissions of carbon dioxide qualify as air pollution” and that “the critical point is that **Congress delegated to EPA the decision whether and how to regulate carbon-dioxide emissions from power plants.**”

## **Stewarding our Future**

The EPA held hearings around the country and solicited public comments on their proposal to move forward with new standards to address carbon pollution. Hundreds of people of faith turned out at public hearings to show their support, and thousands more sent letters and comments urging the EPA to move forward quickly. In total, three million comments of support were received by the agency.

Interfaith Power & Light urges members of the U.S. Congress to stand with us to support these EPA actions. As stewards of Creation, we must do better if we are to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Our children deserve a stable climate and a sustainable future. We believe that a swift and equitable transition to clean energy is a moral imperative, and cleaning up our nation's power plants is a critical first step.