



EPA's Carbon Pollution Standards for New Power Plants Myths vs. Facts

Myth: The Carbon Pollution Standard Prohibits the Use of Coal in Power Plants.

Fact: False. Existing coal-fired power plants are not covered by the new proposal. The rule proposes a technology neutral standard for carbon pollution from new power plants. New coal plants using carbon capture and storage technology that capture approximately 60% of their carbon pollution can meet the new standard. There are coal plants in development that can meet this standard.

Myth: Congress Never Intended the Clean Air Act to Cover Carbon Pollution from Power Plants.

Fact: False. 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](#), the Clean Air Act requires EPA to protect our public health and welfare from air pollutants – such as carbon pollution from power plants - that cause climate change. And in a 2011 [decision](#), the Court restated “that emissions of carbon dioxide qualify as air pollution subject to regulation under the Act” and that “the Act ‘speaks directly’ to emissions of carbon dioxide from the [power] plants.” The Court went on to describe the process for issuing performance standards governing these emissions stating, “[T]he critical point is that Congress delegated to EPA the decision whether and how to regulate carbon-dioxide emissions from power plants.”

Myth: Existing Power Plants Adding New Pollution Controls for Mercury, SO₂ and NO_x Will Have to Meet the New Carbon Standards Too.

Fact: False. The Carbon Pollution Standard applies to new power plants. The proposed rule specifically states that modifications to existing plants will not trigger the new carbon standards. EPA will set a standard for modified plants when the agency issues standards covering existing sources. EPA's proposed rule also states that under established regulations ([40 C.F.R. 60.14\(e\)\(5\)](#)) the installation of new air pollution control technology on an existing plant would be not be interpreted as a “modification” under Clean Air Act Section 111.

Myth: The New Rule Will Raise Electricity Prices.

Fact: False. This rule will not have any substantial cost and would not impact electricity prices at all, because the conventional coal power plants covered by this rule are currently considerably more expensive to construct than wind or natural gas power plants or energy efficiency. This is why only one company has broken ground on a new coal plant since 2008, and that plant received hundreds of millions of dollars in federal support because it plans to use carbon capture and sequestration.

Myth: The New Rule Lead to Power Plant Closures and Job Loss.

Fact: False. This rule will not affect existing power plants. And it will have almost no impact on power company plans, since almost no power companies are planning to build power plants that cannot meet this standard.

Myth: The New Rule Will Harm Certain Parts of the Country that Rely on Coal-Fired Power Plants.

Fact: False. New coal plants are expensive and as a result there are only a handful of proposals left, most of which are not economically viable. It is possible that new coal plants will be built in Texas and Illinois that can meet this standard.

Myth: EPA's Rule Is Just a Form of Cap & Trade.

Fact: False. This is rule not cap and trade. It is a common sense limit on carbon pollution from new power plants. This rule would not cap emissions and it does not include trading.

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