

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has finalized a rule to reduce carbon emissions from existing power plants—a critical step to address climate change in the U.S. The rule, dubbed the Clean Power Plan, asks each state to design its own strategy to achieve carbon reduction targets by 2030. It offers Maine a great opportunity not just to reduce climate change, but to lower electricity bills and boost the state economy.

Basics on the Clean Power Plan in Maine

In August 2015, the EPA finalized a rule to curb carbon pollution from existing power plants. The EPA has set a 11 percent emission reduction target by 2030 for Maine. States must submit their plans for compliance with the Clean Power Plan starting in the summer of 2016.

The EPA rule will require Maine to reduce its carbon emissions, but it also offers the state a significant opportunity to save its consumers money and boost its economy. **A Public Citizen analysis projects that the Clean Power Plan will cut Maine electricity bills up to 19.9 percent by 2030.**

The state should seize the opportunity to serve its citizens—who overwhelmingly support the CPP¹—and fulfill Gov. Paul LePage's goal to bring down Maine's high energy costs. In fact, Maine can not only meet the Clean Power Plan target, but achieve even greater reductions if the state continues to invest in its successful renewable and energy efficiency initiatives.

The Clean Power Plan Will Cut Mainers' Electricity Bills

- Based on the EPA's conservative data, by 2030, electricity bills will be 14.1 to 19.9 percent lower under the Clean Power Plan, saving the average Maine household up to \$190 annually.²
- Without the Clean Power Plan a typical Maine household will pay roughly \$958 for electricity in 2030; with the Clean Power Plan it will pay \$767 to \$823.³
- Maine could see even greater savings than the EPA's data suggest because the agency omits entire categories of efficiency measures that states can use, such as building codes and appliance standards⁴

Continuing to Promote Energy Efficiency Will Benefit Maine Consumers and the Environment

- Efficiency Maine's energy efficiency programs, through the 2011-2014 fiscal years, created lifetime energy savings totaling over \$964.7 million.⁵
- Efficiency Maine's programs aid both consumers and the economy. For every \$1 spent, the programs generate \$3 in energy savings and \$4 in Gross State Product.⁶
- These programs have also been great for the climate, reducing approximately 300,000 tons of CO₂ annually, equal to removing 52,000 cars from the road.⁷
- Maine is a participant in the Regional Greenhouse Gas

Initiative (RGGI), which caps and reduces power sector CO₂ emissions.⁸ The CO₂ cap declines each year by 2.5 percent, leading to 2.8 million tons in 2020.⁹ Maine's consumer oriented framework of RGGI results in 85 percent of revenues generate by direct toward energy saving initiatives.

Maine's Robust Clean Energy Economy Still Has Room to Grow

- As of 2006, Maine had 2,500 of the 3.7 million jobs related to renewable energy and energy efficiency in the U.S. This number is expected to increase by 7.1 percent per year, equating to about 600 new jobs per year.¹⁰
- Maine's renewable portfolio standard, requiring 40 percent of electricity to come from clean energy sources, has already attracted \$900 million in private investment to implement green technologies. This number is expected to increase by \$1.9 billion by 2023.¹¹
- The Number Nine Wind Farm, located in Aroostook County, has the capacity to produce 250 megawatts of power. This wind farm will create 300 construction jobs and approximately 12 permanent positions.¹²
- Maine has harvested many renewable resources including wind and tidal energy. Expanding into solar energy will provide numerous positive benefits including energy diversity and security, reduced electricity price and less air pollution.¹³

ENDNOTES

¹ NRDC, New Bipartisan Poll: Americans Embrace Climate Action, clean energy & Health Protections – Majorities in Maine, New Hampshire, Virginia, Florida, and Colorado back an agenda of clean water, clean air, health safeguards and action on climate change, January 22, 2015, <http://www.nrdc.org/media/2015/150122.asp>

² See PUBLIC CITIZEN, CLEAN POWER, CLEAR SAVINGS: THE EPA CLEAN POWER PLAN WILL CUT MAINE ELECTRICITY BILLS BY 11.4 TO 12.5 PERCENT BY 2030 (2015).

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Efficiency Maine, 2014 Efficiency Maine Annual Report (2014), <http://www.energymaine.com/docs/2014-Efficiency-Maine-Annual-Report.pdf>.

⁶ Natural Resources Council of Maine, Energy Efficiency in Maine, <http://www.nrcm.org/projects-hot-issues/clean-air-clean-energy/energy-efficiency/energy-efficiency-in-maine/>.

⁷ Efficiency Maine, Triennial Plan of the Efficiency Maine Trust 2011-2013, April 2010, http://www.energymaine.com/docs/EMT_Final_Tri_Plan-1.pdf.

⁸ Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, Program Design, <http://www.rggi.org/design>.

⁹ Maine DEP, CO₂ Budget Trading Program (2013).

¹⁰ Maine Department of Labor, Maine's Green Economy: An Overview of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Sectors (2010), <http://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/publications/pdf/GreenEconomyReport.pdf>.

¹¹ American Council On Renewable Energy, Renewable Energy in Maine, June 2014, <http://www.acore.org/files/pdfs/states/Maine.pdf>.

¹² Portland Press Herald, Big county, big ambitions for wind in Maine, October 27, 2013, http://www.pressherald.com/2013/10/27/big_county_big_ambitions_for_wind/.

¹³ Natural Resources Council of Maine, Maine PUC's Solar Power Study Released Today Shows Enormous Benefits, March 3, 2015, <http://www.nrcm.org/news/nrcm-news-releases/maine-puc-solar-power-study/>.