

*The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has finalized a rule to reduce carbon pollution 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 Virginia a great opportunity not just to address climate disruption, but to lower electricity bills and boost the state economy.*

## Basics on the Clean Power Plan in Virginia

In August 2015, the EPA finalized a rule to curb carbon pollution from existing power plants. The EPA has set a 37 percent emission reduction target by 2030 for Virginia. States must submit their plans for compliance with the Clean Power Plan starting in the summer of 2016.

The EPA rule offers a significant opportunity to save Virginia electricity consumers money and boost the state economy. **A Public Citizen analysis projects that Virginia energy efficiency measures under the Clean Power Plan will cut electricity bills up to 6.9 percent by 2030.**

Virginia can save electricity consumers even more money if it adopts stronger energy efficiency policies. It should seize this opportunity to serve its citizens, who overwhelmingly support more investment in efficiency and clean energy.<sup>1</sup>

## The Clean Power Plan Will Cut Virginians' Electricity Bills

- Based on the EPA's conservative data, by 2030, electricity bills will be 5.2 to 6.9 percent lower under the Clean Power Plan, saving the average Virginian household up to \$105 annually.<sup>2</sup>
- Without the Clean Power Plan a typical Virginian household will pay roughly \$1,529 for electricity in 2030; with the Clean Power Plan it will pay \$1,423 to \$1,449.<sup>3</sup>
- Virginia 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 standards.<sup>4</sup>

## Promoting Energy Efficiency Benefits Virginia Consumers and the Economy

- Based on 2013 data, energy efficiency is a \$289 million industry in Virginia that supports an estimated 9,400 jobs.<sup>5</sup>
- Energy efficiency programs in Virginia during 2011 saved the state 109,224 MWh or the equivalent of the electricity for 7,600 homes.<sup>6</sup>
- But Virginia, which is ranked 35 by the American Council on an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) in its 2014 State Energy Efficiency Scorecard for widespread adoption of policies and regulations to support the energy efficiency industry, can do far better to promote energy savings.<sup>7</sup>

- In fact, policies that promote efficiency could save Virginia \$1.8 billion in electricity costs alone and save households \$325 annually.<sup>8</sup>

## Virginia Can Capitalize on the Expanding Clean Energy Economy

- As of 2010, Virginia's had 66,772 jobs in the clean energy sector with an annual growth rate of 4.7%.<sup>9</sup>
- Virginia imports more than half of its total energy used, approximately 1,309 trillion Btu, giving the state plenty of incentive to increase its homegrown clean energy.<sup>10</sup>
- Virginia has the potential to meet 37 times its current electricity needs with renewable energies. These energies include wind, solar, geothermal, and biopower.<sup>11</sup>
- Virginia onshore wind energy in 2012, generated 155 MW—enough energy to power 45,000 households. Virginia could see a growth in wind generation as development of offshore wind farms could generate over 3,000 MW of power, equivalent to 10% of the state's annual consumption or power for 800,000 households.<sup>12</sup>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> 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, February 15, 2015, <http://www.nrdc.org/media/2015/150205.asp>.

<sup>2</sup> See PUBLIC CITIZEN, CLEAN POWER, CLEAR SAVINGS: THE EPA CLEAN POWER PLAN WILL CUT VIRGINIA ELECTRICITY BILLS (2015).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Virginia Energy Efficiency Industry Council, 2013 Virginia Energy Efficiency Industry Census: Report and Recommendations, <http://www.vaeec.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/VAEEC-2013-Census-Report-FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Clean Energy Works For Us, Virginia's Clean Energy Economy: Key Facts and Resources, <http://cleanenergyworksforus.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Virginia.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> ACEEE 2014 State Energy Efficiency Scorecard <http://database.aceee.org/state/virginia>.

<sup>8</sup> Georgia Tech and the Nicholas Institute, Energy Efficiency in the South April 2010, [http://cepl.gatech.edu/drupal/sites/default/files/Energy%20Efficiency%20in%20the%20South%20Appendices\\_0.pdf](http://cepl.gatech.edu/drupal/sites/default/files/Energy%20Efficiency%20in%20the%20South%20Appendices_0.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Brookings, Sizing The Clean Economy: The Clean Economy in the State of Virginia, <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Series/Clean-Economy/51.PDF>.

<sup>10</sup> Virginia Department of Mines Minerals and Energy, 2014 Virginia Energy Plan, October 1, 2014, [http://www.dmme.virginia.gov/DE/LinkDocuments/2014\\_VirginiaEnergyPlan/7Section1GeneralEnergyInfo.pdf](http://www.dmme.virginia.gov/DE/LinkDocuments/2014_VirginiaEnergyPlan/7Section1GeneralEnergyInfo.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Clean Energy Works For Us, Virginia's Clean Energy Economy: Key Facts and Resources, <http://cleanenergyworksforus.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Virginia.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> NRDC, Renewable Energy for America: Harvesting the Benefits of Homegrown, Renewable Energy, <http://www.nrdc.org/energy/renewables/virginia.asp>