



**Delaware Interfaith Power & Light**  
*A Religious Response to Climate Change*  
www.delawareipl.org

EPA Docket Center  
Environmental Protection Agency, Mail Code: 28221T  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Re: Docket ID Number EPA-HQ-OAR-2017-0355

My name is Lisa Locke. I serve as Executive Director of Delaware Interfaith Power & Light. Our mission, which we share with our 39 state affiliates, representing 20,000 faith communities, is to serve as a religious response to climate change through promotion of energy conservation, energy efficiency, renewable energy and environmental justice strategies.

Our goal, ultimately, is to assure the preservation of a healthy, sustainable planet and closer to home, to improve the everyday quality of life of our families, our neighbors, our communities.

We believe we have a moral responsibility to care for creation, to protect those most vulnerable, to scientifically inform and spiritually deepen our understanding of our relationship with each other and the natural world. And given that understanding, we believe climate change is the defining moral issue of our times.

I had recently written that the EPA's decision to repeal the Clean Power Plan, which limits carbon pollution from coal, oil and natural gas burning power plants - our nation's leading contributor to climate change - is confounding and appalling. Today I submit that it is unconscionable and indefensible.

Rationale for the proposed repeal defies peer-reviewed findings of over 97 percent of climate scientists and supporting positions of 197 leading scientific organizations around the globe. It ignores concerns of national and international health and medical associations. It obscures the true cost of burning fossil fuels. And it dismisses the opinion of over 70 percent of Americans, who support regulations on greenhouse gas emissions, which we know to be the dominant driver of a warming planet. And yet they/we are not being heard. To whom is the EPA and our administration listening? To whom are you beholden?

It is the mission of the EPA "to protect human health and the environment." It has a legal obligation to regulate carbon emissions, supported by a 2007 Supreme Court decision and a 2009 ruling by EPA that CO2 is a pollutant under the Clean Air Act.

The EPA created the Clean Power Plan with extensive input from citizens across the country, including 4.3 million comments on the draft plan and input from hundreds of meetings with states, utilities, communities, and others.

The EPA, under new administration, now proposes to repeal the Clean Power Plan, originally offering public hearings only in West Virginia's coal country. And though three additional hearings are being planned, this effectively and discriminatively limits the opportunities for public discourse on this critically important issue.

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We have become increasingly concerned to see that the administration has been removing references to climate change, most alarmingly from websites of the EPA and the National Institute of Environmental Health. We have been somewhat reassured to see that, for the time being, the NASA website maintains its section on *Global Climate Change - Vital Signs of the Planet* and the NOAA website maintains extensive materials on Climate Change indicators, human causes and societal impacts.

We witness those impacts, as every day the media brings new images of melting ice caps, retreating shorelines, devastating weather events, bleaching of coral reefs, species extinction, uncontrolled spread of disease. We can see it right here in Delaware. According to an EPA report, higher water levels are already eroding beaches, submerging lowlands, damaging farmland, worsening coastal flooding and increasing salt levels in critical estuaries and aquifers. Our growing season is being affected, as are migratory patterns of the birds and waterfowl that we take so much delight in, which attract tourists from around the world. All of this underscores a moral consensus that climate change is a grave, growing and insufferable threat to human life and all creation.

We do not believe that God will intervene to save us from our ill-informed and reckless mistakes. We have a long and dismal history of risking our health and spoiling our nests; of desecrating this beautiful, wondrous, miraculous Creation that sustains us. And we have paid a high price in human suffering.

Delaware Interfaith Power and Light stands, faith-driven and science-based, as part of that moral consensus and pledges to be part of the solution. Practical, efficient, enhancing, sustaining resources are available here and now. It's up to us to embrace them, to share them, and to call on decision-makers to do the same.

And that includes opposing repeal of the Clean Power Plan.

You don't need us to quote statistics on health impacts of more pollution in the air. Or of the devastating threats from rising temperatures, heat waves, extreme precipitation, flooding, hurricanes, sea level rise, cold waves and winter storms, wildfires, flooding, droughts and vector-borne diseases. Or how some vulnerable (a term you have banned in the CDC?) communities will be impacted more than others.

The sad irony is that you have all the information available to you, to make the wisest possible decisions, to fulfill your mission, and you appear to cherry pick them to suit your agenda.

We cannot afford to live in a state of denial. Nor can our policy makers. We need a reality check for ourselves and we need to hold our leaders accountable. Then, together, we need to *believe* that we can pull back from the brink of our own destructiveness. It will require inquiring minds, open hearts, helping hands and a certain leap of faith to deliver this precious and all too fragile cargo to our children's children. They are counting on us. Our sincere thanks to DNREC for hosting this critically important public listening session.