



EESI Welcomes More Ambitious Clean Power Plan Giving States More Time to Comply Might Turn Out to Be a Good Thing

August 3, 2015—EESI welcomes the Obama Administration's more ambitious Clean Power Plan, whose final version will be unveiled today according to a [White House press release](#). Drafts of the plans called for reducing carbon emissions by at least 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. The final plan sets the reductions goal at 32 percent. **"This is a very big deal,"** said Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) Executive Director Carol Werner. **"An extra 2 points may not sound like much, but they lead to a 6.7 percent more ambitious target.** The Administration is clearly trying to push other countries to be similarly ambitious in their carbon reduction goals ahead of the climate change talks in Paris at the end of this year. That's excellent news."

"The final Clean Power Plan is a huge step forward as we seek to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions," explained Werner. "This is the first time the government has regulated carbon emissions from the power sector, the nation's largest source of carbon pollution at 31 percent of the total. If we are to have any chance of keeping global warming below 3.6 Fahrenheit, we need to tackle power plants, particularly coal plants."

Werner was not particularly alarmed by EPA's decision to give states an additional two years (until 2022 instead of 2020) for their interim deadline to reduce emissions from power plants. "This may sound counterintuitive: EESI was among the first organizations to call for climate change action back in 1988, and we certainly can't afford needless delay now. But it is important to get it right. **By giving states more time, EPA makes it easier for them to be ambitious and creative.** They can plan for the long haul and invest more in renewable energy and energy efficiency, rather than take the easy way out and put up natural gas plants. These are relatively cheap and fast to build, but do not do enough to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the long term." The Administration has also seemingly recognized the risk of pushing states towards natural gas instead of renewables, and has accordingly increased its renewable energy targets to 28 percent of a state's total generating capacity in its final rules (up from 22 percent).

Werner was also gratified to see that the Plan continues to encourage states to work together, and gives them even more flexibility to achieve their emission reduction goals. **"We hope that states will begin to see the Clean Power Plan as a real opportunity.** They will have plenty of flexibility to pursue different strategies, many of which can boost economic growth and create well-paid, local jobs. Market forces already are doing a lot of the heavy lifting, by making clean power ever more attractive. Renewables (biomass, geothermal, hydropower, solar and wind power) are increasingly competitive with fossil fuels throughout the United States. And the American public has been clear in poll after poll that it wants clean energy because of all the benefits it brings."

EESI is hopeful about early indications that the final Clean Power Plan includes incentives to reward states taking early action on renewable energy and energy efficiency, especially in low-income communities.

EESI has done a series of briefings on the Clean Power Plan (see list below) and is preparing another one—for September—which will examine the final version of the Clean Power Plan and discuss compliance strategies.

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EESI Clean Power Plan Briefings

- [How Can States Comply with the Clean Power Plan?](#) (June 5, 2015)
- [EPA's Clean Power Plan: Will it Work and Will it Be Upheld?](#) (April 8, 2015)
- [The Supreme Court and EPA Carbon Rules](#) (March 6, 2014)

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