

Testimony of Catholic Climate Covenant
At the public hearing regarding Repeal of Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines
for Existing Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units
Charleston, WV
November 29, 2017

Thank you for providing me this opportunity to comment. My name is Jose Aguto. I am the Associate Director of the Catholic Climate Covenant, which seeks to inspire people and institutions to care for creation and care for the poor. With our 16 national Catholic partner organizations, we guide the U.S. Catholic Church's response to climate change through education, resources, and public witness.

When EPA announced the proposed rule seeking to repeal the Clean Power Plan this October, Bishop Frank Dewane of Venice, Florida, Chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, expressed disappointment and called on leaders to "hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."

"The USCCB, in unity with Pope Francis, strongly supports environmental stewardship, and has for several years called on our nation to help curb carbon emissions through a national carbon standard. . . . The CPP may not be the only possible mechanism for addressing carbon emissions, but, unfortunately, the Administration does not propose an adequate alternative as it seeks to dismantle the CPP." [USCCB [10/17](#)]

In solidarity with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Catholic Climate Covenant urges EPA not to revoke the CPP. It risks damage to our air, our waters and, most importantly, our people, particularly the poor and vulnerable." [USCCB [3/17](#)]

If EPA chooses to do so, we ask that the CPP remain in place until an alternative is proposed, approved, and implemented. That alternative should meet or exceed the CPP's national carbon emission reduction goals of 32% by the year 2030 relative to 2005 levels.

Our position is grounded in long standing Catholic teaching. In 1971, Pope Paul VI wrote, "Man is suddenly becoming aware that by an ill-considered exploitation of nature he risks destroying it and becoming in his turn the victim of this degradation." His successors, Saint John Paul II, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis have affirmed and advanced the Church's call for us to care for creation, which is 1 of 7 themes of Catholic social teaching.

Pope Francis said, "[C]limate change is a problem which can no longer be left to a future generation. When it comes to the care of our 'common home', we are living at a critical moment of history." [USCCB [10/15](#)]

Therefore, we urge the Administration not to leave this challenge of climate change to future generations, by repealing the CPP without a plan in place to reduce national carbon emissions at similar or greater levels.

The impacts of climate change are harming people, especially our poor and vulnerable neighbors, right now. We know that hundreds of people have died, and millions are still suffering from the unprecedented hurricanes and wildfires which occurred across our nation earlier this year – events intensified by climate change.

In this spirit, we urge the Administration to acknowledge and act upon the scientific consensus that human activity is the primary cause of climate change. The USSCB stated in 2001, “In facing climate change, what we already know requires a response. . . . Significant levels of scientific consensus . . . justif[y], indeed can obligate, our taking action intended to avert potential dangers.”

That scientific consensus was recently expressed by the EPA and 12 other federal agencies in the National Climate Assessment, which found:

“[B]ased on extensive evidence, it is extremely likely that human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases, are the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century. For the warming over the last century, there is no convincing alternative explanation”

The CPP responds to the scientific consensus and seeks to prevent the kind of climate disruption our nation has experienced, in our future. Its repeal, without a viable and operational alternative, constitutes inaction which we cannot afford.

In conclusion, we heed the call of our bishops, who said in 1991, “As individuals, as institutions, as a people we need a change of heart to preserve and protect the planet for our children and for generations yet unborn.”

We hope that we can dialogue and work with you, to manifest a shared change of heart, so that together, we can meet our obligation to act right now, to protect our poor and vulnerable neighbors, our common home and our common future.