

Oral testimony to EPA on EPA's decision to abandon all regulation of carbon emissions from power plants under the Clean Air Act

October 1, 2026

Good afternoon. My name is Jeremy Symons, and I am speaking on behalf of the Environmental Protection Network, a nonpartisan organization of more than 800 former EPA experts.

We wish to thank EPA's career staff for their continued public service saving lives and protecting human health and the environment.

We strongly oppose this proposal.

This proposal is another backward step in this administration's retreat from EPA's core mission and core principles.

Across a growing list of rollbacks, EPA is retreating from the science, the law, and the transparency that have long grounded the agency's work to protect human health and the environment.

In this case, EPA is proposing an extraordinary reversal by declaring that the agency no longer has responsibility under the Clean Air Act to curb greenhouse gas pollution from power plants.

It's an extraordinary reversal because not a word of the Clean Air Act has changed. The only thing that has changed is that we now have an administration that wants to take the "clean" out of the Clean Air Act.

This is a proposal built on fairy tales and pixie dust.

Today, I want to point out three failures made by EPA in this proposal.

First, EPA is not following the law.

The Clean Air Act explicitly defines effects on public welfare to include effects on both weather and climate. The Supreme Court has recognized greenhouse gases as air pollutants under the Act.

While *West Virginia v. EPA* placed limits on a particular approach EPA used to regulate power plants, it did not tell EPA to stop altogether.

EPA is trying to turn a speed limit into a stop sign.

That is not a faithful reading of the Clean Air Act nor the Supreme Court's decisions.

Second, EPA is not following the science.

The evidence that greenhouse gas pollution threatens public health and welfare is stronger than ever and can't be erased with a presidential sharpie.

EPA's current leadership argues that this rule simply won't do enough to solve climate change, so why bother?

Few problems are entirely solved with a single action. That is especially true when it comes to the environment.

America's long tapestry of environmental progress – from the burning rivers and smog-choked skies of the 20th century to cleaner air and safer drinking water today – was not woven from a single strand. Congress provided the framework to weave that path, and EPA has done that strand by strand.

If each strand of action along the way had to bear the full weight of proof in the destination, we would have made no progress at all.

That is why the Clean Air Act puts clear responsibility on EPA to act when major sources contribute significantly to dangerous pollution.

That is precisely the case when it comes to reducing U.S. power-sector carbon emissions.

Third, EPA is not being transparent.

EPA's political leaders are especially intent on hiding the health toll of its actions from the public.

They are presenting a one-sided economic analysis that calculates the cost savings to polluters without calculating the health costs to the American people.

According to EPA's own modeling, the agency's actions, including this rule, will lead to nearly 50 percent more coal use and pollution in 2035 than if EPA does its job and reduces power plant pollution.

Look around, because it could be any of us who will suffer from this added pollution – pollution that attacks our lungs, our hearts, and our brains through the air we breathe and the water we drink.

This administrator doesn't want to acknowledge that his actions dumping the costs of pollution on the most vulnerable among us.

We urge EPA to withdraw this proposal and return to its mission.

Once again, we want to thank EPA's career staff. Stay strong. Follow the law. Follow the science. Be transparent.

This cruel upheaval of EPA's mission shall one day pass.

Thank you.