NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

INSPIRING AMERICANS TO PROTECT WILDLIFE FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE.

Fact Sheet

The Clean Power Plan and New York

Across the United States and around the world, climate change poses an increasingly dire threat to wildlife, communities, and public health. Changes to our climate are destroying critical wildlife habitat, causing habitat ranges to shift, increasing incidence of pests and invasive species, decreasing available food and water, and even increasing the rate of species' extinction. Luckily, the Environmental Protection Agency has stepped up to address the largest source of carbon pollution in the U.S.

What is the Clean Power Plan

On June 2nd, 2014, the Environmental Protection Agency announced the Clean Power Plan – first-ever standards to reduce carbon pollution from existing power plants, our nation's largest source of climate-changing emissions. The Clean Power Plan establishes state pollution targets, based on each state's particular fuel mix and emissions-reduction potential. **Once implemented, the Clean Power Plan will reduce national carbon pollution by 30% by 2030, an important step towards protecting our wildlife heritage from the impacts of unchecked climate change.**

New York's wildlife is suffering because of climate change

One of the planet's most majestic species, the LEATHERBACK SEA TURTLE, is directly threatened by climate change. The leatherback sea turtle is commonly found off the coast of New York and is on the national and state endangered species list.[i] Warming temperatures pose a number of threats to this vulnerable species. As water warms, it can skew the sex ratio to favor females which will likely have negative long-term implications for the species' viability. Climate change-driven extreme storms also damage turtle habitats.[ii]

TROUT are on the front lines of the climate change battle. New York's state fish, the brook trout, requires clear, cold, healthy waters and populations are expected to decline with a warming climate.[iii]

As temperatures continue to rise, a growing number of iconic wildlife species in every state around the country face an increasingly dire situation. If we hope to protect these vulnerable species, action to combat climate change is critical.

Wildlife benefits of Clean Power Plan go beyond climate change

In addition to limiting carbon pollution to combat climate change, the Clean Power Plan will also reduce numerous other pollutants that are harmful to wildlife and their habitats – delivering substantial additional benefits to our country's wildlife heritage. **According to EPA's estimates, the Clean Power Plan will remove between 424,00 to 471,00 tons of sulfur dioxide and 407,000 to 428,000 ton of nitrogen oxides, which will mean less acid rain and nitrogen pollution in lakes and estuaries downwind of power plants.[iv]**

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New York and the Clean Power Plan

By reducing reliance on coal-burning for power generation in the U.S., the Clean Power Plan will also help protect wildlife from mining practices that destroy habitat, and from leaking toxic coal waste ponds that poison our waterways. The Clean Power Plan is clearly a win for wildlife!

Climate change threatens New York's vibrant outdoor recreation economy

Outdoor recreation and tourism is a big part of New York's identity and economy. But climate change poses a direct threat to outdoor recreation, including hunting and fishing, as droughts, floods and higher temperatures impact fisheries and outdoor activities across the state.

- Every year, outdoor recreation generations $33.8 billion in consumer spending and 305,000 direct New York jobs.[v] **Of that consumer spending $1.5 billion is from hunting and $1.9 billion is from fishing.[vi]**
- At least 53% of New York residents participate in outdoor recreation every year.[v]

Extreme weather threatens New York's infrastructure and industry

New York is no stranger to climate-change driven extreme weather. The state has experienced record-breaking hurricanes, water scarcity, and increased flooding in recent years.

- In 2012, Hurricane Sandy, the second costliest hurricane in American history and largely believed to have been exacerbated by climate change, was particularly damaging to New York City. The storm caused over $65 billion in damages and took 285 lives.[vii]
- In December 2013, New York experienced record breaking, though pleasant, heatwaves. Temperatures reached 73 degrees, about ten degrees higher than the previous record for that time of year.[viii]

Damage on Long Island from Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

New York on the path to a wildlife friendly energy future

In 2012, power plants and major industrial facilities in New York emitted more than 46 million metric tons of carbon pollution—roughly equal to the yearly pollution from more than 9 million cars.[ix] By applying the four building blocks of the Clean Power Plan, EPA estimated that New York can reduce these emissions by 44% by 2030.

Under the Plan, EPA estimates New York could generate 6.1% of their power from renewable sources in 2020 and 18% in 2030.[x] This is a less ambitious plan than New York's self-imposed renewable energy target of 29% by 2015.[xi] New York can obviously do more to achieve even further reductions simply by fulfilling current commitments to expand renewable energy, and EPA should strengthen the standard to reflect this.

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New York can reduce carbon pollution and grow the economy

New York should comply with the Clean Power Plan through continued emphasis on wildlife-friendly renewable energy and energy efficiency.

New York should use their huge offshore wind potential to comply with the Clean Power Plan.

- **Offshore wind power is a major clean energy resource just waiting to be tapped – the winds off the coast of New York can and should play a major role in how New York complies with the Clean Power Plan.**[xii]
- The National Renewable Energy Laboratory estimated that New York's *huge* offshore wind energy potential could generate more than 147 GW of power **– enough to power more than 35 million homes.**[xiii]
- Since 2009, renewable energy generation from wind, solar, and geothermal sources in New York has increased by nearly 80%.[xiii]
- The potential positive impacts of capping carbon pollution in New York could add $556 million to the economy and create over 8,400 jobs.[xiv]

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