



Statement from the Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology on EPA's Affordable Clean Energy Rule

(Washington, D.C., August 24, 2018) – As the nation and the world suffer unprecedented heatwaves, devastating wildfires and increasingly severe weather, the Trump administration continues to ignore the reality of climate change.

On Tuesday, Acting Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Andrew Wheeler released a proposal to scrap the Clean Power Plan and replace it with a significantly weaker rule.

The proposed Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule is reportedly meant to reduce carbon emissions from the power sector by allowing states to decide whether and how they want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“Addressing climate change is not an optional matter. The EPA has a moral and legal obligation to reduce carbon pollution to protect human health,” said Ted Penton, SJ, Secretary of the Office of Justice and Ecology of the Jesuit Conference, the organization that represents the Jesuits in Canada and the United States. “We are deeply disappointed in this inadequate proposal that prioritizes the interests of the fossil fuel industry and threatens human health, particularly those who are most vulnerable and at risk from harmful pollution and an increasingly unstable climate.”

According to the EPA's own analysis, more than 1,000 lives could be lost annually by 2030 under this proposal due to the health impacts of exposure to increased air particulates, compared to the Clean Power Plan that would have significantly reduced carbon pollution and saved lives.

We echo Pope Francis' urgent call to hear “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor,” by shifting away from an extractive model of development and developing “policies so that ... the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced” (Laudato Si', n.49 and n.26).

We call on the president to work with the administration and Congress to develop and advance bipartisan climate policies that protect our common home and lead us toward a sustainable, clean energy future.