

January 22, 2014

**Wayde Schafer**

**Sierra Club**

311 N Mandan St. #1

Bismarck, ND 58501

701-530-9288

My name is Wayde Schafer. I'm the Conservation Organizer for the Dacotah Chapter of Sierra Club here in Bismarck. I'm speaking today in support of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed rules regulating carbon emissions from both new and existing coal-fired power plants.

This is a rule whose time has come. Carbon pollution is the main contributor to climate disruption. Over the past few years we have seen an increase in the extremes of climate disruption fueled superstorms like Sandy, increased flooding, widespread wildfires, and record droughts throughout the U.S.. We can't afford to wait any longer to act. These extreme events cost hundreds of lives and hundreds of billions of dollars. Coal-fired power plants account for approximately 40 % of the total energy related carbon pollution. For the health and welfare of North Dakotans and for the stability of the planet, we must reduce our carbon emissions to reduce the threat of climate disruption.

Even though carbon pollution is also linked to life-threatening air pollution that can trigger asthma attacks and other illnesses, we currently have no national protections on how much carbon can be released into our air by the nation's largest source of carbon pollution – dirty coal-fired power plants. As temperatures rise from climate disruption, more North Dakotans will be exposed to conditions that can result in illness and death due to respiratory illness, heat-and-weather related stress, and disease carried by insects. We need the EPA's new carbon emission standards.

The extremes associated with climate disruption also negatively affect agriculture in North Dakota. Warmer temperatures in winter mean more pests and crop diseases can survive farther north. We saw this with the alfalfa crop in parts of North Dakota last year. Wetter springs delay planting. Early fall snows catch crops before they can be harvested; similar to what happened to a number of sunflower farmers last fall. Hotter and drier summers cause stress on growing plants. There is already evidence of changes in our growing season. All these will only get worse without a cap on carbon emissions from coal-fired power plants.

North Dakota's continued reliance on inefficient and dirty lignite coal to meet our energy needs is short sighted. North Dakota has the sixth largest wind resource in the nation, according to the American Wind Energy Association. The wind energy industry has already created more than 1,000 manufacturing jobs in the state. Yet we have barely begun to tap this renewable energy source. Getting more of our energy from wind and other

renewable energy sources creates jobs, can meet our long-term energy needs, and reduces our carbon footprint.

There is something we can do immediately to reduce our carbon footprint. North Dakota is dead last of all the states when it comes to energy efficiency. By using energy more efficiently we can reduce the amount of coal we burn and in turn reduce the amount of carbon we put into the atmosphere.

I urge the EPA to adopt strong carbon emission standards to protect public health, our communities, and our planet.