

## **Opening Statement**

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Subcommittee on Environment

Joint Subcommittee on Environment and Subcommittee on Energy  
*“Science of Capture and Storage: Understanding EPA’s Carbon Rules”*

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to the Chair of the Energy Subcommittee, Ms. Lummis, for holding this morning’s hearing.

Today we will discuss the performance standards proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for carbon dioxide emitted from new power plants. This hearing is similar to a hearing we held last fall, but this time we have the opportunity to hear directly from EPA on this important issue. I’d like to thank Acting Assistant Administrator Janet McCabe for being here today. I’d also like to thank the witnesses on our first panel for their thoughtful testimony.

Last year, President Obama laid out his agenda to address one of the biggest environmental challenges of our time—climate change. A key component of that plan, and any effort to reduce the amount of carbon emitted by the United States, is the need to significantly lower the amount of carbon produced during electricity generation. Emissions from power plants represent about one-third of the greenhouse gases produced by the United States, and EPA’s proposed rule takes an important first step in tackling this major source of carbon pollution.

To emphasize - the proposed rule sets carbon limits on new power plants, not existing plants or those under construction. Looking at current and future market conditions, especially competitive natural gas prices, it is likely that many if not most new power plants will be able to meet the proposed carbon limits. It’s the market, not the proposed rule, that is contributing to the proliferation of natural gas power plants over coal. In my home state of Oregon, our last coal plant is scheduled to be closed by 2020, and some of that generation capacity will be replaced with a natural gas plant.

The proposed EPA rule will create a market incentive for the continued development and promotion of carbon capture and storage, or CCS, technologies. The advancement of CCS technologies is essential if new coal power plants are to operate in the low carbon future we must achieve. I also want to point out that when EPA determines the “best system of emission reduction,” it is actually legally required to promote the development of technology. I am sure we will hear much more on the state of CCS technologies from today’s witnesses. That technology development is good for the economy and the earth.

Last week, we debated the EPA’s proposed carbon limits on the House floor. Some called into question whether CCS was “adequately demonstrated” because the technology is not commercially available. There is a difference between the two. The legal requirement is “adequately demonstrated,” and the EPA has met that burden.

Let me close by saying that I know many of my colleagues across the aisle are skeptical about whether humans contribute to climate change. But the scientists, overwhelmingly, are not. And my constituents are not, and indeed they are seeing the impacts of climate change now and asking policymakers to act. This winter’s reduced snowpack not only means a shorter ski-season and less of

an economic boost from tourism, but it means less water for agriculture and salmon migration this spring and summer. The acidity of the Pacific Ocean is increasing, putting Oregon's fisheries and shellfish industries at risk. Warmer temperatures are leading to increased outbreaks of the mountain pine beetle, harming the Northwest's forest industry. Warmer temperatures are making it more challenging to grow our region's famous Pinot Noir grapes.

The impacts are real and we must do all that we can to mitigate the effects of climate change. The carbon dioxide we release now will affect generations to come. I am supportive of the Administration's efforts to transition the United States to a low carbon economy. The EPA's proposed rule for new power plants is a critical step in that direction.

Thank you and I yield back.