

FAQ: The Clean Power Plan and South Carolina

Why is South Carolina's target for reduced carbon pollution the 3rd highest in the nation?

The "high" target just reflects recent and already-planned carbon pollution reductions in South Carolina. In fact, when two nuclear reactors currently under construction are factored in, the state's target drops from 51% to 28%. The fact is that South Carolina has already reduced its carbon pollution by 30% since 2005 and will be able to meet its target more easily than most states.

Does nuclear energy count as carbon free energy?

Yes, for purposes of this rule. New nuclear capacity and 5.8% of existing nuclear capacity can be counted towards meeting the state target.

How does the EPA expect states to reduce their carbon pollution?

The EPA has outlined four primary ways of meeting the targets for reduced carbon pollution:

1. Boost system-wide energy efficiency (boosting efficiency reduces total system carbon emissions)
2. Deploy zero-carbon energy resources, including renewable sources like solar and wind, as well as nuclear
3. Boost coal plant efficiency (which decreases carbon pollution per unit of coal burned)
4. Increase natural gas usage (natural gas produces less carbon pollution than coal)

What about coal plant retirements?

Coal plant retirements will also contribute towards meeting the targets. Coal plants that have been retired since 2012 and those scheduled for future retirement will help South Carolina comply with this rule.

How has South Carolina's carbon pollution changed over the past decade?

South Carolina's carbon pollution has decreased dramatically since 2005 (~30%). At the same time, our state has grown its economy and attracted new employers like Boeing and Google. South Carolina has proven that cleaning up carbon pollution can be good for the environment and the economy.

Why is it important to reduce carbon pollution in South Carolina?

Carbon pollution represents a threat to public health, the economy, and the environment. The air and water pollution that accompanies coal plants undermines the health of our citizens, which compromises our state's economic vitality. Impacts from carbon pollution also include rising seas and increased extreme weather events like storms and drought. All of which represent challenges for coastal tourism, forestry, and agriculture in South Carolina.

Can South Carolina meet its target while protecting citizens and businesses?

By embracing energy efficiency and clean energy technologies like solar, South Carolina will not only protect consumers, it will create jobs and lower electricity bills at the same time. Reducing energy demand and sourcing our electricity locally with low-cost solar power is a win-win for our state.