



**Testimony of Lee Geisse, Regional Program Manager, BlueGreen Alliance
Public Hearing on EPA's Clean Power Plan
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
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Hello, my name is Lee Geisse. I am a 27-year maintenance employee, proud third generation union member from Canton, Ohio, and I'm the Regional Program Manager for the BlueGreen Alliance in Ohio.

We at the BlueGreen Alliance are guided by a simple philosophy—we believe that Americans don't have to choose between good jobs and a clean environment; we can and must have both. We also believe that unions are and must continue to be a powerful voice for protecting workers, communities, and our environment.

A changing climate is a threat to our health, to our communities and to the economy. We must act. It's why we support the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) authority to implement standards that limit carbon pollution from existing sources. The first-ever proposed limits on emissions from existing power plants are a step forward as we work to tackle climate change while ensuring power reliability and fostering economic stability.

According to the [National Climate Assessment](#), climate change in the Great Lakes region will increase risks to commercial and recreational fish populations; increase invasive species; and cause declining beach health and declining ice cover. [Every decade](#) since 1950 has been warmer than the decade before. With each passing season, little changes are adding up to a problem that concerns me more all the time.

We are pleased that this rule permits each state to craft a compliance plan that is tailored to the specifics of its local and regional economy; that will protect existing jobs while reducing emissions; and that can create opportunities to grow new jobs, encourage investment, and jumpstart new technologies. The plan that's best for Ohio will be crafted by Ohioans.

This proposal can be a significant step forward, if we all engage to develop and implement it. States must be encouraged to include labor voices in these discussions.

While this is about the environment, it's also about making the power supply as reliable and efficient as possible. Over 10 years ago, [a computer glitch](#) and a tree branch caused the biggest blackout we've ever seen. While this historic power outage began in Ohio it affected 50 million people in eight states and parts of Canada.

The Clean Power Plan will promote innovative ways to upgrade and invest in our electric grid and overall infrastructure. It's imperative that we make these investments to prevent infrastructure failures like the 2003 blackout and expand power grid capacity.

Along those same lines, the emphasis the plan places on expanding renewable energy and energy efficiency efforts is a good one. Governor Kasich bowed to special interests and froze Ohio's renewable energy standard. We must reverse that course because the state will be better positioned to diversify our energy portfolio by making renewables a bigger portion of the state's energy mix.

Not too long ago, the Department of Transportation proposed a rule raising fuel economy and greenhouse gas pollution standards for new cars and light duty trucks. While these standards build on decades of progress, they represent the highest fuel efficiency standards in a generation at 54.5 miles per gallon for the average new vehicle in 2025. This will lead to new, higher-paying jobs and cut more than [6 billion](#) metric tons of greenhouse gas over the life of the program.

DOT's rule is the kind of policy that has fueled the resurgence in the auto industry at facilities like the Lordstown stamping and assembly plants near Youngstown, Ohio—where many of the components for fuel-efficient vehicles are being made. The goals put forward in the Clean Power Plan are just as achievable.

If we do this right, the Clean Power Plan has the potential to create and sustain quality, family-sustaining jobs across the country.

Each state has the opportunity to craft a plan that works for them. And the BlueGreen Alliance is working in Ohio and around the country to make sure that the voice of working people is brought to this planning process.

We will continue to work to make sure this gets done the right way. And, that workers have a say in their economic and environmental future.

Thank you.