

Good morning. My name is Rachel Cleetus, and I am the climate program director for the Union of Concerned Scientists.

I am testifying today in strong opposition to EPA's egregious and dangerous proposal to entirely abandon its authority and responsibility under the Clean Air Act to set limits on the power sector's global warming pollution. With climate impacts rapidly worsening—in some cases irreversibly—and proliferating data centers driving increases in fossil fuel-fired power plants, this move by EPA administrator Zeldin threatens to greatly exacerbate public health harms.

Coal- and gas-fired power plants are the United States' largest stationary source of global warming emissions. Globally, the United States is the second-largest contributor of annual heat-trapping emissions, and the largest historical emitter. There is no question that U.S. power plant emissions are a significant contributor to the cumulative emissions that drive fossil-fueled climate change.

This proposal stands in direct contradiction to decades of scientific evidence underscoring the human health harms from heat-trapping emissions. A 2025 report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS) that synthesizes the latest science says that “... *the evidence for current and future harm to human health and welfare created by human-caused greenhouse gases is beyond scientific dispute.*”

This proposal also contradicts established law, namely the Clean Air Act, a law passed by Congress. EPA's authority to regulate GHGs under the Clean Air Act was confirmed by the Supreme Court in 2007 and upheld by courts repeatedly since then.

At a time when people across our nation are already experiencing costly and deadly climate-fueled disasters—including extreme heatwaves, floods, drought and wildfires—EPA should be doing everything it can to protect communities, businesses and our economy from the mounting toll. Instead, if this proposal is finalized, it would exacerbate the harms and costs to everyone.

EPA should not be forcing a false choice between our health and our prosperity. In fact, it is abundantly clear that the economic costs and human toll from climate change are already rapidly escalating. As just one example, we are seeing the consequences in the insurance market where people are facing skyrocketing premiums driven in part by climate-fueled disasters.

Quite simply, the choices we make today about our carbon emissions will have profound consequences for generations to come. With the planet on the verge of breaching 1.5°C of global warming and with the US and the world just experiencing the hottest summer on record, it couldn't be clearer why the EPA must act urgently to limit heat-trapping

emissions. EPA should do its job and stop looking for dubious ways to abdicate its responsibility to protect the public while propping up the interests of fossil fuel polluters.

I urge you to abandon this harmful proposal to gut EPA's Clean Air Act authority to regulate power sector heat-trapping emissions and instead please fulfill your obligations to limit health-harming global warming pollution.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.