



Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Honorable Members of Congress:

We, the undersigned, are Presidents of 22 Local Unions representing over 10,000 United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) environmental engineers, environmental scientists, environmental protection specialists and support staff. We are writing to protest the lack of progress in addressing global warming.

In the United States, it is estimated that our energy-related activities account for three-quarters of our human-generated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, mostly in the form of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from burning fossil fuels. More than half the energy-related emissions come from large stationary sources, primarily coal-electric power plants, while about a third comes from transportation. Agriculture, forestry, industrial processes (such as the production of aluminum, cement and steel), other land use, and waste management are also important sources of GHG emissions in the United States. While not the most potent greenhouse gas, CO₂ is the main driver for the greenhouse effect, due to its abundance. Other gases contributing to GHG emissions include methane (CH₄), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and several artificial gases (hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs); and sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆). Control of emissions of these six (6) chemicals and chemical groups is addressed in the Kyoto Protocol.

The major cause of the current climate change is the uncontrolled and unlimited burning of fossil fuels – coal, natural gas, and oil. The impacts of global warming are clear: scientists have observed that, in general, sea levels have risen, glaciers are shrinking, there are abnormally large changes in the range and distribution of plants and animals, trees are blooming earlier, growing seasons are lengthened, ice on rivers and lakes is freezing later and breaking up earlier, and the permafrost is thawing. As environmentalists and public health advocates, we assure you that we do not have more time to wait for more evidence about the speed of future warming and then take even more time to decide whether, and how much, to limit emissions. If we wait, we will be committing the next generation of Americans to approximately double the current global warming concentrations, with the associated adverse impacts on human health and the environment.

Although the United States announced a comprehensive strategy to reduce the GHG intensity of the American economy by 18 percent over the 10-year period from

2002 to 2012, the Federal government is using primarily voluntary and incentive-based programs to reduce the bulk of the emissions. Even though the U.S. EPA's role is primarily one of encouraging "voluntary" reductions, energy conservation, and the use of alternative energy sources, we are not convinced that this strategy has been either effective nor are we convinced that it has been effectively carried out by the Agency. The U.S. EPA could do more to encourage the use of currently available scientific and technological options to reduce GHG emissions.

For example, we feel that the Agency is failing to investigate coal-electric plants for technical options to control carbon. Although U.S. EPA publicly acknowledges that promising technologies like "FutureGen" (i.e., Integrated Gas Combined Cycle technology with carbon sequestration) are technically achievable, the Agency has not investigated FutureGen's applicability when Clean Air Act (CAA) permits are issued. Some U.S. EPA engineers and scientists have indicated to us that they have been explicitly directed not to discuss coal integrated combined cycle technology in evaluation of Environmental Impact Statement alternatives under the National Environmental Policy Act.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy several new coal-electric plants will come on line in the U.S. within the next ten years. The decision whether or not to control carbon emissions from these plants will be made soon. Unless Congress acts quickly to regulate carbon, these coal plants will significantly increase U.S. carbon emissions during the critical decades when our Nation's emissions must be significantly reduced. However, prior to legislating carbon control, we request that Congress undertake aggressive oversight of U.S. EPA's CAA procedures, particularly U.S. EPA's GHG emissions programs, and allow U.S. EPA's scientists and engineers to speak frankly and directly with Congress and the public regarding climate change, without fear of reprisal.

The climate changes we are witnessing are those that are largely due to human behavior. Therefore, we ask that a prudent environmental policy be put in place to take every reasonable step to abate and control GHG emissions. The voluntary and incentive-based programs to encourage the reduction in GHG emissions are not enough. We request that Congressional Leaders not only support a vigorous program of enforcement and reduction in GHG emissions, but also support research programs aimed at abating global warming through direct, cost-effective technological intervention (e.g., geo-engineering), while at the same time supporting policies and regulations that reduce GHG emission sources, in line with the principles of the Kyoto Protocol.

Finally, we request that Congress mandate that U.S. EPA inform the public about their 'right to know' regarding the current technology that is available to control carbon emissions from coal-electric plants under review.

Very sincerely yours,

/s/
Dwight A. Welch, Union Co-Chair
U.S. EPA National Partnership Council
NTEU Chapter 280/Washington, DC

/s/
William Evans, President,
NTEU Chapter 280/U.S. EPA HQ's
Washington, DC

/s/

John J. O'Grady, President
AFGE Local 704/U.S. EPA Region 5
Chicago, IL

/s/

Alan Hollis, President
AFGE Local 3631/U.S. EPA Region 3
Philadelphia, PA

/s/

Charles Orzechoskie, President
AFGE National Council of EPA Locals
#238/ Chicago, IL

/s/

Paul Sacker, President
AFGE Local 3911/U.S. EPA Region 2
New York City, NY

/s/

Mark Coryell, President
AFGE Local 3907/National Vehicle &
Fuel Emissions Laboratory/Ann Arbor

/s/

Lesley Mills, President
NAGE Local R1-240/Narragansett, RI
ORD NHEERL Atlantic Ecology Div.

/s/

Larry Penley, President
NTEU Chapter 279/ Cincinnati, OH
U.S. EPA Office of R & D Laboratory

/s/

Henry G. Burrell, President
AFGE Local 3428/U.S. EPA Region 1
Boston, MA

/s/

Silvia Saracco, President
AFGE Local 3347/U.S. EPA Research
Triangle Park/RTP, NC

/s/

Nancy Barron, President
NAGE Local R5-55/U.S. EPA Region 4
Atlanta, GA

/s/

Steve Shapiro, President
AFGE Local 3331/U.S. EPA HQ's
Washington, DC

/s/

Geraldine Cripe, President
NAIL Local 9/ Gulf Breeze, FL
National HEER Laboratory

/s/

Paul Scoggins, President
AFGE Local 1003/U.S. EPA Region 6
Dallas, TX

/s/

Andrew Grange, Ph.D., President
NAGE Local R12-135/ORD NERL
Las Vegas, NV

/s/

David Walters, President
AFGE Local 2900/Robert S. Kerr
Research Laboratory/Ada, OK

/s/

Wendell Smith, President
ESC EPA – Unit /U.S. EPA Region 9
San Francisco, CA

/s/

Steve Kinser, President
NTEU Chapter 294/U.S. EPA Region 7
Kansas City, KS

/s/

Patrick Chan, President
NTEU Chapter 295/U.S. EPA Region 9
San Francisco, CA

/s/

Dave Christenson, President
AFGE Local 3607/U.S. EPA Region 8
Denver, CO

/s/

Steven Roy, President
AFGE Local 1110/U.S. EPA Region 10
Seattle, WA