



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MICHIGAN

EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

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As stewards of 25% of the world's fresh water, Michiganders understand the importance of protecting our Great Lakes. The Great Lakes are a part of our culture and our way of life. That's why we're so fortunate to have a watchdog like the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), on duty to protect our lakes from dangerous pollution.

Recently, the EPA—acting with the authority provided to it by the Clean Air Act and confirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court— set limits on carbon emissions from new power plants. This is an important step in the right direction, as Michigan is home to some of the dirtiest and most-polluting power plants in the nation. These coal-fired power plants are the nation's biggest polluters, spewing millions of pounds of pollutants, including, arsenic, mercury and lead into our rivers, streams, and lakes every year.

It's unfortunate that Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette filed a lawsuit against the EPA to block the limits on carbon emissions from going into effect. Schuette claims that the regulations would have negative impacts on the economy. In reality, the costs of *inaction* are much more harmful to Michigan.

Extreme weather events, including drought, hurricanes and floods are costing billions of dollars in damages. Climate change related events such as heat waves, high levels of ozone pollution, and outbreaks of vector-borne diseases have already had a significant impact on health care costs. The longer we allow CO2 concentrations to rise, the more dramatic the eventual cuts in emissions, and the higher the associated costs, will be.

Pollution from power plants is also linked to heart and respiratory disease. In Michigan alone, over 250,000 children have asthma and over 4 million people live in counties with dangerous levels of air pollution. Recently, the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer announced that air pollution from power plants is a carcinogen and poses a major threat to public health, along with asbestos and tobacco.

The role of the state's attorney general is to serve as the people's lawyer, not the lawyer of polluting power plants. Blocking measures that would protect the health of Michigan residents and our economy shows a disregard for the best interests of our citizens.

The League of Women Voters (LWV) has voiced its support of the EPA's work to reduce dangerous pollution from power plants. We applaud the EPA's efforts to protect future generations from dangerous pollution.

Attorney General Schuette should stop his political attacks and drop his lawsuit against the EPA, allowing this watchdog agency to focus on the important work it does: protecting public health and protecting our air, land and water.

Susan Smith, President
League of Women Voters of Michigan