

# Why America's Health Professionals Say We Need a Clean Electricity Standard for our Health

**Switching from polluting fossil fuel-based electricity to clean, safe renewable energy is one of the most important things we can do to protect and improve our health and avoid severe health impacts from climate change.**

## **Burning fossil fuels for electricity is bad for our health.**

- Burning fossil fuels causes and aggravates many health problems because of the associated pollution. The health problems include:
  - Asthma, lung cancer, respiratory infections, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
  - Heart disease and stroke
  - Neurological disease
  - Adverse pregnancy outcomes and impacts to children's cognitive brain development
- The health effects of burning fossil fuels to produce electricity disproportionately impact communities of color and low-income communities.
- Particulate matter from electricity generation using fossil fuels led to 16,000 premature deaths in the United States in 2014.

## **Clean electricity standards improve health by reducing air and water pollution.**

- A strong federal clean electricity standard would avert an estimated 85,000 – 300,000 premature deaths and over \$1 trillion in health and environmental costs through 2050.
- Renewable energy standards in just ten states starting in 2019 would create \$4.7 billion in health benefits by 2030 due to decreased particulate matter pollution.
- The 10 states that are expected to see the largest reductions in premature deaths are Ohio, Texas, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Florida, North Carolina, Indiana, Tennessee, Michigan, and Georgia.

## **A strong clean energy standard provides healthy and affordable clean energy for all. A federal standard should:**

- Promote residential and community solar and other forms of distributed renewable energy.
- Exist in tandem with air pollution reductions and targeted investments in historically marginalized communities.
- Prevent an increase in energy burden for low- and moderate-income households through the expansion of grant programs like LIHEAP.
- Establish utility-specific plans to help reward utilities who build large amounts of new clean energy, not just those who already have significant clean energy capacity built.
- Ensure that incentive payments to utilities are funded adequately by the federal government to distribute costs more equitably since federal taxation is progressive (low-income Americans pay less), as opposed to utilities charging low-income customers for cost increases.



## **Oil, gas, and "clean" coal do not belong in a clean energy standard.**

- Health professionals know that climate change is the greatest health threat of the century. To limit warming and protect health, we must stop building new fossil fuel infrastructure and we must stop burning any form of fossil fuels as quickly as possible.
- Oil and gas facilities also produce harmful air pollution associated with asthma in children and exposure to toxic chemicals in nearby communities.