

Clean Energy Brings Health, Savings and Jobs to Low-Income Michigan Communities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Carbon pollution is a dirty problem for the United States, and Michigan is one of the top offenders with more than 20 active coal plants, including five of the nation's most offensive. Coal plants drive up energy costs for some of our most vulnerable populations, and disproportionately contribute to health problems in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.

CURRENT SITUATION IN MICHIGAN

By the end of 2015, 10% of Michigan's energy mix will be made up of renewable energy, a goal set in the Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy Act of 2008. The Renewable Energy Standard it created is proving to be cost effective with wind and solar energy costs at an all-time low and dropping, making these technologies competitive with conventional methods.

Yet, Michigan remains heavily dependent on imported coal, and five coal plants in Michigan received a failing Environmental Justice Performance grade because of their effects on low-income communities and communities of color. Wayne County's River Rouge Plant, one of the dirtiest coal plants in the nation, sits in the River Rouge community where people of color make up 65% of the population.

HEALTH IMPACTS

The Michigan Department of Community Health calls Detroit and its downriver neighborhoods the "Epicenter of Asthma Burden." According to a Sierra Club report, Detroit ZIP codes are three to six times more likely to have asthma-related hospital admissions than the state as a whole. In 2014, the American Lung Association ranked Wayne County as the region with the highest number of pediatric asthma cases in Michigan. Wayne County also is home to more

poor residents than any county in Michigan, with 25% of its residents living in poverty (\$19,073 for a parent with two kids).

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Between 2008-2011, Michigan cut energy use by more than 7.7 million megawatt-hours—enough to power 900,000 Michigan homes for a year—and produced more than \$800 million in net benefits for customers. The state's Renewable Portfolio Standard has spurred more than \$2.3 billion in new investments. Efficiency measures are expected to reduce annual carbon emissions by approximately 6.8 million tons in 2015 and up to 11.4 million tons in 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Support Gov. Snyder's call for a 15% reduction in energy waste and 19-24% of the state's energy coming from renewables, so that by 2025, Michigan should meet 30-40% of its energy needs through renewable energy and energy efficiency. Michigan also must increase incentives for multi-housing unit and low-income housing weatherization, and preserve and strengthen EPA regulations, such as the Clean Power Plan, to maintain the cornerstone of our state's measures and regulate the pollution affecting the health and well-being of residents.



Michigan's asthma rates are 10% higher than the national average, with Wayne County having the highest number of pediatric asthma cases in the state.