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Clean Energy Group Praises House Introduction of Four-Pollutant Legislation

The Clean Energy Group (CEG) today welcomed the introduction in the U.S. House of Representatives of The Clean Air Planning Act, proposed federal legislation that seeks to substantially reduce harmful air emissions from the nation's power plants. Congressmen Charles Bass (NH), Jim Davis (FL), and Jim Cooper (TN) introduced the legislation; companion legislation was introduced in the Senate earlier this year and sponsors include Senators Carper (DE), Chafee (RI), Gregg (NH) and Alexander (TN).

The Clean Air Planning Act, or CAPA, would establish comprehensive national standards governing air emissions from power plants. The result would be significant new reductions in harmful air emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulfur dioxides (SO₂), mercury, and carbon dioxide (CO₂). "The Clean Energy Group has long advocated a comprehensive, four-pollutant approach for the regulation of power plant air emissions," said Michael Bradley, the group's Executive Director.

Bradley noted that the approach proposed by CAPA would achieve significant human health and environmental benefits, while also providing regulatory certainty as the electric industry plans future investments. (Currently, electric generating companies are faced with a patchwork of different federal and state standards and compliance schedules.) In addition, Bradley indicated that CAPA, in comparison with other proposals for dealing with power plant air emissions, would achieve the most environmental and health benefits at the lowest cost.

Unlike several other legislative proposals, CAPA would not only tighten emissions of NO_x, SO₂, and mercury, but also proposes a market-based, flexible approach for achieving CO₂ reductions in a cost-efficient manner. In this way, CAPA would help preserve fuel diversity, a critical factor in ensuring a secure electric energy supply.

"Comprehensive, four-pollutant legislation like CAPA is a victory for both business and the environment," Bradley noted. "We believe this legislation represents an achievable, balanced middle ground in the debate over clean air legislation," he continued. "Now that CAPA has been introduced in both the House and the Senate, and other proposals have been put forward, we are hopeful that Congress will make rapid progress towards addressing new clean air legislation during the current session," Bradley concluded.

The Clean Energy Group is a coalition of electric generating and distribution companies that share a commitment to responsible environmental stewardship. Members conduct business in 28 states and represent natural gas-fired, coal-fired, nuclear, and renewable generation sources. In combination, they produce enough electricity to supply more than 80 million homes across the country. Established in 1997, CEG advocates policies to balance the nation's economic, energy, and environmental needs.

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