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Clean Energy Group Praises Introduction of Four-Pollutant Legislation

The Clean Energy Group (CEG) today applauded the introduction of The Clean Air Planning Act, proposed federal legislation that seeks to substantially reduce harmful air emissions from the nation's power plants. The legislation was introduced by Senators Carper (DE), Chafee (RI), and Gregg (NH). The Clean Air Planning Act would establish comprehensive national standards governing air emissions from all power plants, resulting in significant new reductions in harmful air emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulfur dioxides (SO₂), mercury, and carbon dioxide (CO₂). CEG is a coalition of energy companies that, in combination, 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.

"The Clean Energy Group has long advocated a comprehensive, multi-pollutant approach for the regulation of power plant air emissions," said Michael Bradley, the group's Executive Director. Bradley noted that the reasons for adopting such a strategy are compelling and include massive cost savings relative to an incremental, pollutant-by-pollutant approach, significant human health and environmental benefits, and a higher degree of regulatory certainty as the industry plans its future investments.

Unlike other legislative proposals, The Clean Air Planning Act would tighten not only emissions of NO_x, SO₂, and mercury, but also CO₂. Incorporating CO₂ delivers important environmental benefits at a negligible cost, while maintaining a diverse electricity supply and creating business opportunities for other industry sectors. The incorporation of CO₂ provides business and regulatory certainty and achieves significant public environmental benefits.

"Multi-pollutant legislation is a victory for both business and the environment," Bradley noted, "and a market-based approach that addresses CO₂ allows businesses to achieve important health and environmental benefits in the most cost-efficient manner."

The Clean Air Planning Act would achieve deep cuts in NO_x, SO₂, mercury, and CO₂ at a comparatively small cost to both industry and the retail consumer. At a time when states are moving forward to cut power plant emissions, including CO₂, the proposed legislation seeks to level the playing field by creating a national CO₂ program. In addition, The Clean Air Planning Act provides much-needed improvements to the New Source Review (NSR) program, designed to maintain environmental standards but simplify industry compliance. As compared to other legislative proposals that address power plant emissions, this legislation occupies the solid middle ground.

The Clean Energy Group is a coalition of electric generating and distribution companies that share a commitment to responsible environmental stewardship. Members include: Consolidated Edison, Inc., Entergy Corporation, Exelon Corporation, KeySpan Corporation, PG&E Corporation, PSEG, and Sempra Energy. Companies in the Clean Energy Group conduct business in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

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