



**ASSOCIATION OF  
METROPOLITAN  
WATER AGENCIES**

**LEADERS IN WATER**

1620 I Street, NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20006

**P** 202.331.2820 **F** 202.785.1845  
amwa.net

December 1, 2014

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW.  
Washington, DC 20460.

Via email: [A-and-R-Docket@epa.gov](mailto:A-and-R-Docket@epa.gov)  
Attention Docket ID: EPA HQ-OAR-2013-0602

Re: AMWA comments on the “Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines for Existing Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units” (the Clean Power Plan) proposal under section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act.

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

The Association of Metropolitan Agencies (AMWA) is an organization representing the largest publicly owned drinking water utilities in the U.S., and together the membership serves drinking water to over 130 million people from Alaska to Puerto Rico. Many of our member utilities also provide wastewater collection, treatment and disposal services, and reclaimed water services.

AMWA welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Clean Power Plan (CPP) proposal, which aims to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from existing fossil fuel-fired power plants in the United States. As significant users of electricity within the “energy-water nexus,” drinking water utilities can and should be permitted to play a role in achieving this goal. Although, it is important to note that drinking water utilities on their own account for a very small percentage of overall energy use related to the energy-water nexus. The predominant source of energy expenditures is through the end use of water by residential and commercial customers.

Therefore, we ask EPA to clarify in the final rule that measurable renewable energy and demand-side energy efficiency measures by drinking water utilities be allowed under the Clean Air Act Section 111(d) state plans. However, EPA should also make it clear that CPP compliance decisions should not supersede water utility decisions on how to best achieve water supply reliability, operational goals and compliance with Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) regulatory mandates.

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**Diane VanDe Hei**

The processes required for source water extraction, conveyance and treatment and the distribution of finished drinking water to homes and businesses across the country can use large amounts of energy, and varies greatly depending on the water supply source and regional topography. Again, end uses, such as the heating and cooling of water in residential and commercial settings, are much higher in energy intensity and can be a significant source of electric power consumption. Reductions in electricity usage from the established baseline for the extraction, conveyance and treatment of water, as well as end uses, should be eligible to count towards CPP carbon dioxide reduction goals under the rule and eligible for any incentives that may apply for achieving those reductions. Similarly, drinking water utilities are increasingly taking advantage of opportunities to generate renewable energy as part of day-to-day operations. Projects ranging from solar power installations to in-line hydro-electric generation can result in significant energy savings for a water utility – and those savings should also be counted towards CPP goals.

However, even with the broad range of energy efficiency, operations and renewable energy projects common and growing in both scope and number within the drinking water sector, participation in achieving CPP goals must be voluntary. Drinking water utilities are in a unique position where the first and foremost priority is providing a safe, uninterrupted drinking water supply within the strict regulatory standards set under the SDWA. In the arid and semi-arid western U.S., extended droughts continue to highlight the critical need for diversified, reliable water supplies, and water supply planning is a significant challenge. Drinking water utilities are adapting by developing new, drought-resilient supplies, which may be more energy intensive, but offer a higher degree of reliability in the face of climate change. Within these constructs, compliance decisions are complex and extremely variable, and drinking water utilities are in the best position to make the tough decisions about how to best achieve operational and regulatory goals, while balancing system repair and replacement needs and service affordability objectives..

In some cases, the best local decisions with regard to investments for developing new supplies, upgrading or changing treatment, or other operational processes may not be the most energy efficient. As a significant cost in any drinking water utility's budget, energy consumption is always considered, but the impacts of any changes must also consider other factors – primarily supply reliability, SDWA compliance and potential public health impacts. Decisions regarding selection of optimal process(es) for removing contaminants, maintenance of operational reliability, diversification of water sources and avoidance of deferred maintenance are all balanced by utilities in order to protect public health, maintain reliable water availability and other key factors necessary to meet the utility's strategic, sustainable goals.

In summary, AMWA believes that the day-to-day operational and planning decisions on how to best achieve water supply reliability, public health protection goals and regulatory mandates should be left entirely to the discretion of the drinking water utility. No entity should be granted the ability to mandate specific actions or goals for drinking water utilities under the CPP. There is certainly potential for significant energy savings in the water sector from drinking water utilities and end users, but specific projects or goals should only be undertaken on a voluntary basis within the context of local operational necessities. If a utility opts to participate in a CPP, meaningful incentives should be provided for drinking water utilities to implement energy

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efficiency and renewable energy measures where feasible and practical from an operational standpoint – measures such as those promoted by EPA in reports such as “*Ensuring a Sustainable Future: An Energy Management Guidebook for Water and Wastewater Utilities*” (January 2008).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If there are any questions about the above comments, please direct them to Scott Biernat, AMWA’s Director of Regulatory Affairs at 202-331-2820 or [biernat@amwa.net](mailto:biernat@amwa.net).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane VanDe Hei". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Diane VanDe Hei  
Executive Director