

**Statement of Joseph Mendelson III  
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National Wildlife Federation**

**Public Hearing on the Environmental Protection Agency's  
Proposed Carbon Pollution Standard for New Power Plants**

**Docket Number EPA-HQ-OAR-2011-0660; FRL-9654-7**

**Washington, D.C., May 24, 2012**

My name is Joe Mendelson. I am Director of Policy for the National Wildlife Federation's (NWF) Climate & Energy Program. NWF is the nation's largest conservation, education and advocacy organization with more than four million members and supporters across the country. NWF's affiliate organizations are in 48 states and territories. Our mission is to inspire Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future.

And, as you will hear from the inspired NWF speakers representing 12 states that follow my testimony, support for the EPA's proposed carbon pollution standard for new electric power plants as a means to protect our public health and wildlife for future generations is widespread and found throughout the country.

There has never been a more urgent time to stop the carbon pollution that is fueling climate change and ocean acidification. Each year, our nation's power plants pump nearly 2.3B tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Global carbon pollution is increasing in record amounts - jumping by 6% over the last year. If this pollution path is not altered global temperatures will increase by at least 4 degrees C (7.2 degrees F) and potentially 6 degrees C (10.8 degrees F) by 2100. This current path also leaves wildlife and local communities on the frontlines experiencing the increasingly virulent impacts of climate change on a daily basis.

At a 4 degrees C temperature increase, scientists predict massive extinctions around the globe. In this last year alone, the U.S. has seen wildfires harm the Monarch butterfly migration and push the Houston toad to the brink of extinction, record drought threaten endangered whooping cranes, and extreme floods blow out fish populations in numerous rivers and streams. Our 2011 report [\*Game Changers: Air Pollution, a Warming Climate, and the Troubled Future for America's Hunting and Fishing Heritage\*](#) details how toxic air pollution and carbon pollution from power plants represents a double whammy exacerbating the disappearance of our nation's beloved fish and game species. And our recent report [\*On Thin Ice: Warming Winters Put America's Hunting and Fishing Heritage at Risk\*](#) provides real world experiences with how the decades-long trend to shorter, warmer and less snowy winters is having major implications for all forms of outdoor recreation.

At the same time, communities across the country face a record number of climate change-fueled extreme weather events that are taking their toll on families and personal property. In 2011, the U.S. experienced over \$35B worth of extreme weather losses. This property damage has left families homeless, destroyed critical infrastructure, and placed an immediate human cost on

accelerating climate change. Without a national policy that begins to tackle carbon pollution these problems will accelerate in speed and force and may become unstoppable.

It is for these very reasons that NWF's affiliates passed a resolution in 2009 resolving that all new coal-fired power plants being built should be required to control their carbon pollution. EPA's proposed rule does just that, sets a standard - regardless of fuel type - that says we can no longer indiscriminately pump carbon pollution into our skies, and ensures that as we modernize our power sector we do not saddle future generations with more high carbon polluting infrastructure that lasts for decades to come.

Importantly, EPA cannot stop there. Since 1999, I have been engaged in efforts to utilize the Clean Air Act to limit carbon pollution. One legal petition, numerous court rulings (including two Supreme Court rulings), and three presidents later we are now only tackling the first piece of the nation's largest sector of carbon pollution. It has been over 12 years since my own efforts began. I have literally watched my two daughters grow up and close to 40B tons of uncontrolled power plant carbon pollution emitted during this time. We cannot delay additional efforts any longer and standards to control the carbon pollution from existing power plants must follow in short order. There is not only a legal obligation to do so, but also a moral duty to act. We cannot leave future generations wondering why we waited to take the next step. Thank you.