

Testimony of Larissa Koehler, EDF Senior Attorney

Clean Power Plan Listening Session in San Francisco – February 28, 2018

Good afternoon. My name is Larissa Koehler and I am a senior attorney at Environmental Defense Fund. As an environmental advocate in California for over five years, I have fought for policies that prioritize clean energy solutions over polluting power plants. Simply put, over-reliance on forms of power such as coal is uneconomical, with harmful and significant impacts on the environment and human health.

Notwithstanding my professional commitment to ensuring sound environmental policies, I am here on a more personal note today. Six weeks ago, I had the tremendous fortune to become a first-time aunt. Meeting my nephew Theo for the first time has given the importance of my work a whole new meaning.

Because my brother, sister-in-law, and nephew Theo live in Michigan, they reside in a state in which a significant percentage of energy still comes from coal-fired power plants. As a source of high levels of mercury, sulfur dioxide, and arsenic, these power plants can cause dangerous health impacts such as asthma and other respiratory illnesses, which are particularly acute in young children.

Michigan is making strides – both Consumers Energy and DTE Energy, two of the state's largest energy producers, have pledged to reduce reliance on polluting sources of energy in favor of renewables. However, that progress, and progress across the country, must not be undermined by EPA's refusal to uphold its legally-affirmed duty to regulate dangerous carbon pollution, which threatens the health of our loved ones and the planet, and risks stymying the type of innovation that this country was built on.

I stand with the majority of Americans in every state supporting strong limits on carbon pollution from power plants, and am here today to urge EPA to secure a better future for Theos everywhere. It's time to put the well-being of American citizens and the environment above the interest of a single industry and enforce the Clean Power Plan. Thank you.