



http://www.register-herald.com/news/expanding-economic-opportunities/article_75d8474f-bc04-5bc2-883c-b4400b3296b4.html

<

PREVIOUS

SSHS officials unveil parking, transportation plans for first two weeks

>

EDITOR'S PICK

Expanding economic opportunities

By Daniel Tyson REGISTER-HERALD REPORTER Jul 31, 2016

0

It has been argued that the federal Clean Power Plan poses a threat to West Virginia's economy, especially in the southern part of the state where coal was the source of thousands of jobs.

However, a new report states the impact could be lessened if policymakers at the federal and state levels took advantage of the state's circumstances and leverages its other energy resources.

"West Virginia is fortunate in that it has tremendous energy resources in addition to coal, and these other resources – including natural gas, renewable energies (wind, solar, hydropower) and energy efficiency – are relatively untapped," reads the report from the Center for Energy and Sustainable Development at the West Virginia University of Law and Downstream Strategies LLC.

In August 2015, the EPA issued the CPP, which is a series of pollution reduction measures aimed at lowering carbon dioxide emissions from the nation's power sector by nearly a third from 2005 levels by 2030.

Existing coal-burning power plants in West Virginia would be required to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions by 37 percent in 2030 compared to 2012 levels, or if West Virginia elects to rely on a statewide aggregate emissions cap, by 29 percent from 2012 levels, the study found

The report, "Expanding Economic Opportunities for West Virginia under the Clean Power Plan," outlines how the Mountain State can meet CPP requirements while developing new jobs and tax revenues in the natural gas, renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors.

The thin-report has eight basic recommendations, including the removal of legislative restrictions on state plan development, issuing revised integrated resource planning requirements for electric utilities, adopting an Energy Efficiency Resource Standard and renewable Energy Portfolio Standard, encouraging greater use of the state's natural gas resources, adopting policies that encourage investment in clean distributed generation resources, exploring options to partner with neighboring states to develop a multi-state plan with emissions trading and supporting integrated regional economic development initiatives.

"West Virginia is uniquely positioned to adapt to these changes and meet the many challenges facing the Mountain State. While West Virginia power plants must reduce coal consumption to comply with the Clean Power Plan, the state's utilities can at the same time make new investments in other energy resources developed in West Virginia," according to the report.

West Virginia, along with 28 other states, have challenged the legality of the CPP by filing a lawsuit against EPA's authority. On Feb. 9, the U.S. Supreme Court granted a stay, and oral arguments in the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals are scheduled for September, with an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court likely thereafter.

"Although there is some uncertainty about the legality of the Clean Power Plan, the nation is moving forward to de-carbonize the power sector through increased reliance on low-cost natural gas and renewable resources such as solar and wind, largely driven by economics rather than environmental regulation," said James Van Nostrand, director of the Center for Energy and Sustainable Development said.

The move toward renewable energy is not completely lost on West Virginia, he said. Appalachian Power, for example, has increased its wind and solar portfolios.

The CPP rule provides states considerable flexibility in choosing how to meet their emission reduction responsibilities, including the option of engaging in emissions trading programs with other states, improving the operating efficiency of coal plants, building new natural gas-fired power plants, increasing the use of renewable energy resources, and scaling up end-use energy efficiency programs.

The report presented two scenarios illustrating how West Virginia can reach compliance by integrating renewable energies into the mix. The report recommends West Virginia take advantage of the flexibility allowed by the rules and adopt an "all-of-the-above" energy approach. The latter would also provide long-term, social and environmental benefits for the state, the report states.

"Implementing the legislative and regulatory policy recommendations in this report would create a climate that promotes new investment in renewable and distributed generation technologies, energy efficiency, and natural gas-fired generation," the report concludes.

0 comments

Sign in

3 people listening

| | | | | |
|--|--|----------|-------|--------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | + Follow | Share | Post comment as... |

Newest | Oldest

Top Video Headlines

of 3

-

