

PSC Symposium On EPA Carbon Regulation
January 22, 2014



My name is Jon Godfread, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs with the Greater North Dakota Chamber of Commerce. I am sure you have heard from my fellow North Dakotans regarding the impact these regulations could have on the coal industry in North Dakota. I simply want to reiterate their message, but also talk about how these regulations could impact Main Street North Dakota.

As you know, the mines and plants in North Dakota directly employ several thousand workers, but I want to speak about the 17,000 who are indirectly supported by a healthy coal industry and the countless other who enjoy a high quality of life due to affordable electricity. In fact, North Dakota's coal industry supplies electricity to more than 2 million customers.

North Dakota provides some of the lowest price electricity in country, by comparison in Colorado electricity is about 10 percent more expensive than here in North Dakota. In California, electricity is about twice as expensive as it is here. Think about that. When you are paying \$200 a month instead of \$100 a month that is \$100 less that can go for groceries, school supplies, doctors' visits, entertainment and other needs. In a city of 50,000 homes, that is an additional \$500,000 taken out of the economy each month. If these regulations raise the price of electricity by even \$10, that is money right out of the pockets of North Dakotans—and it hits businesses and individuals alike.

What that means to North Dakota businesses like the ones the Chamber serves is the ability to hire more workers, manufacture more products, pay higher wages and expand and grow.

North Dakota coal counties support some of the highest wages in the State. Any regulations that endanger the coal industry would not devastate the families who work directly for the mines and plants but also those 17,000 employees who are indirectly supported by the coal industry. These are the jobs that provide the tax revenue to build schools, and the disposable income to support hundreds of other businesses in the State.

As a business group that both serves established businesses in North Dakota and recruits additional businesses to the State, I can attest to the fact that more and more businesses are concerned with their environmental footprint and the quality of the environment around them. The coal industry in North Dakota works hard to ensure that our air and water is clean and pure.

Because we do such a great job protecting our air, land and water from degradation, I can confidently recruit businesses to our State and tell them they will be moving to a State that likely has cleaner air than where they are coming from—as you know, we are one of only 7 states to meet or exceed all federal air quality standards. Because we have such great respect for the environment, we feel the EPA should continue to respect the state's prerogative to implement any new regulations for existing electricity plants. As state, both on the business and regulation side, we have proven we have what it takes to ensure our environment remains pristine.

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