

**National Environmental Youth Advisory Council**  
**Public Meeting: February 28, 2024 – February 29, 2024**

Office of Air and Radiation: Climate, Clean Air, and Environmental Justice

**Presenters:** Alejandra Nunez, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Mobile Sources

**EPA Program Office Background**

The EPA's Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) develops national programs, policies, and regulations to control air pollution and radiation exposure. OAR focuses on pollution prevention and energy efficiency, indoor and outdoor air quality, industrial air pollution, pollution from vehicles and engines, radon, acid rain, stratospheric ozone depletion, climate change, and radiation protection.<sup>1</sup>

OAR is responsible for administering the Clean Air Act, the Atomic Energy Act, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Land Withdrawal Act, the American Innovation and Manufacturing Act, and other environmental laws. Under the authority of the Clean Air Act and the American Innovation and Manufacturing Act (AIM), OAR has finalized and continues to develop a suite of rules designed to reduce harmful pollutants from both stationary and mobile sources, including regulations on the oil and gas industry, emissions standards for new cars and heavy-duty trucks, regulations on fossil fuel power plants, and rules designed to phase down the use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

**Background on Charge Topic**

In this Administration, OAR has undertaken several actions to ensure pollution reductions, cleaner air, and improved health outcomes for all communities. OAR's regulatory agenda includes new regulations on mobile and stationary sources of pollution and rules to phase down HFCs. We have undertaken strong climate actions that together, when fully realized, will significantly reduce climate pollution and create air quality and public health benefits for all Americans.

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<sup>1</sup> About the Office of Air and Radiation, available at <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-office-air-and-radiation-oar>

In December 2023, EPA finalized standards to slash methane emissions from the oil and gas sector, both for new sources and for hundreds of existing oil and gas sources nationwide.<sup>2</sup> Oil and gas operations are the largest sources of methane, a climate pollutant that is many times more potent than carbon dioxide and is responsible for approximately one third of the warming from greenhouse gases (GHG) occurring today. We have also finalized GHG emission standards for new passenger cars and light-duty trucks for model years 2023 through 2026<sup>3</sup> and standards to cut smog- and soot-forming emissions from heavy-duty trucks starting in model year 2027.<sup>4</sup> In addition, last year we proposed two rules that would establish emissions standards starting in model year 2027: a multipollutant standard for passenger cars, light- and medium-duty trucks, and GHG standards for heavy-duty vehicles – together the strongest federal vehicle emissions standards for greenhouse gases and other harmful air pollutants that EPA has established to date. These standards, if finalized, would significantly reduce climate pollution from the transportation sector, which represents the largest share of GHG emissions in the United States.<sup>5</sup> EPA has also developed a suite of regulations from the power sector, which is the second largest source of GHG pollution.<sup>6</sup> These include a rule that reaffirms the foundation of the 2012 Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) for Power Plants,<sup>7</sup> a proposal to revise the MATS standards for coal-fired power plants,<sup>8</sup> the final “Good Neighbor” plan to cut smog-forming pollution from power plants and other industrial facilities,<sup>9</sup> a proposal to strengthen

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<sup>2</sup> Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes Standards to Slash Methane Pollution, Combat Climate Change, Protect Health, and Bolster American Innovation, available at <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-finalizes-standards-slash-methane-pollution-combat-climate>

<sup>3</sup> EPA Finalizes Greenhouse Gas Standards for Passenger Vehicles, Paving Way for a Zero Emissions Future, available at <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-finalizes-greenhouse-gas-standards-passenger-vehicles-paving-way-zero-emissions>

<sup>4</sup> Final EPA Standards for Heavy-Duty Vehicles to Slash Dangerous Pollution and Take Key Step Towards Accelerating Zero-Emissions Future, available at <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/final-epa-standards-heavy-duty-vehicles-slash-dangerous-pollution-and-take-key-step>

<sup>5</sup> Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, available at [https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions#:~:text=Transportation%20\(28%25%20of%202021%20greenhouse,ships%2C%20trains%2C%20and%20planes](https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions#:~:text=Transportation%20(28%25%20of%202021%20greenhouse,ships%2C%20trains%2C%20and%20planes).

<sup>6</sup> Id.

<sup>7</sup> Biden-Harris Administration Reaffirms Scientific, Economic, and Legal Underpinnings on Limits on Toxic Air Pollution from Power Plants, available at <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-reaffirms-scientific-economic-and-legal-underpinnings>

<sup>8</sup> Biden-Harris Administration Proposes to Strengthen the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards for Power Plants, available at <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-proposes-strengthen-mercury-and-air-toxics-standards-power#:~:text=WASHINGTON%20%E2%80%93%20Today%2C%20the%20US%20Environmental,latest%20advancements%20in%20pollution%20control>

<sup>9</sup> EPA Announces Final “Good Neighbor” Plan to Cut Harmful Smog, Protecting Health of Millions from Power Plant, Industrial Air Pollution, available at <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-final-good-neighbor-plan-cut-harmful-smog-protecting-health-millions#:~:text=This%20final%20rule%20implements%20the,the%20NAAQS%20in%20other%20states>.

the wastewater discharge standards for coal power plants (under the EPA's Office of Water),<sup>10</sup> and a proposal to establish carbon dioxide standards for new and existing fossil fuel-fired power plants.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, OAR addresses HFCs through rules to phase down the production and consumption of these potent GHGs commonly used in refrigerators, air conditioners, and other applications. Among other actions, we have established an allowance allocation and trading program for HFCs<sup>12</sup> and a methodology for allocating HFC allowances starting with calendar year 2024,<sup>13</sup> as well as restrictions on the use of HFCs in aerosols, foams, refrigeration, air conditioning, and heat pump products, and a proposed Emissions Reduction and Reclamation Program, which covers activities related to servicing, repair, installation, and disposal of equipment to manage HFCs.<sup>14</sup>

Further, OAR administers a suite of voluntary funding programs to reduce air and climate pollution under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, including the Clean School Bus Program,<sup>15</sup> Clean Ports Program,<sup>16</sup> Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicle Program,<sup>17</sup> Diesel Emissions Reductions Act Funding,<sup>18</sup> and School Air Quality Grants,<sup>19</sup> among others. Finally, EPA also provides technical assistance on energy efficiency solutions for the buildings sector and consumer products through its Energy Star Program, which has helped American families and

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<sup>10</sup> Biden-Harris Administration Proposes Stronger Limits on Water Pollution from Power Plants, available at <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-proposes-stronger-limits-water-pollution-power-plants>

<sup>11</sup> EPA Proposes New Carbon Pollution Standards for Fossil Fuel-Fired Power Plants to Tackle the Climate Crisis and Protect Public Health, available at <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-proposes-new-carbon-pollution-standards-fossil-fuel-fired-power-plants-tackle>

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Will Dramatically Cut Climate-Damaging Greenhouse Gases with New Program Aimed at Chemicals Used in Air Conditioning, Refrigeration, available at <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/us-will-dramatically-cut-climate-damaging-greenhouse-gases-new-program-aimed-chemicals>

<sup>13</sup> Biden Administration Continues Phasedown of Super-Pollutants to Combat Climate Change and Boost U.S. Manufacturing, available at <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-administration-continues-phasedown-super-pollutants-combat-climate-change-and>

<sup>14</sup> Biden-Harris Administration Advances Latest Actions to Address Climate-Damaging HFC Emissions and Boost American Leadership on Safer, More Efficient Technologies, available at <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-advances-latest-actions-address-climate-damaging-hfc>

<sup>15</sup> Clean School Bus Program, available at <https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus>

<sup>16</sup> Clean Ports Program, available at <https://www.epa.gov/ports-initiative/cleanports>

<sup>17</sup> Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicle Program, available at <https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/clean-heavy-duty-vehicle-program>

<sup>18</sup> Diesel Emissions Reductions Act (DERA) Funding, available at <https://www.epa.gov/dera>

<sup>19</sup> Grant Funding to Address Indoor Air Pollution at Schools, available at <https://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/grant-funding-address-indoor-air-pollution-schools#:~:text=EPA%20anticipates%20awarding%20four%20to,received%2C%20and%20other%20applicable%20c%20onsiderations>.

businesses avoid billions of dollars in energy costs and achieve significant GHG reductions through decreased electricity consumption.<sup>20</sup>

EPA's regulatory and non-regulatory work includes robust engagement with the public, so interested stakeholders can provide input to help inform the development of these policies.<sup>21</sup>

### Charge Questions

- Is the Agency's regulatory process sufficiently transparent for meaningful, effective engagement with youth, EJ, and other communities?
- What are areas of interest to youth communities that EPA should engage on? What are the most pressing issues in your communities that the Agency should focus on or prioritize?
- What does success look like for NEYAC? What data or metrics would the group use (if any) to identify successful outcomes of the NEYAC engagement?

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<sup>20</sup> About Energy Star, available at <https://www.energystar.gov/about?s=footer>

<sup>21</sup> The Basics of the Regulatory Process, available at [https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/basics-regulatory-process#:~:text=The%20Agency%20researches%20the%20issues.send%20their%20comments%20to%20us.](https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/basics-regulatory-process#:~:text=The%20Agency%20researches%20the%20issues.send%20their%20comments%20to%20us.;); Get Involved with EPA Regulations, available at <https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/get-involved-epa-regulations>