**What is the Affordable Clean Energy Rule?**

EPA has proposed a new rule for greenhouse gas emissions at power plants called the Affordable Clean Energy Rule (ACE) Rule. This rule is a replacement for the controversial Clean Power Plan (CPP) Rule.

The CPP Rule was developed by the Obama Administration, and it put some definite limits in place to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at power plants. The rule created quite a bit of controversy and EPA was taken to court by a number of parties. The Trump Administration and EPA put the CPP on hold in order to review it for potential repeal and replacement. The new ACE Rule is the result of this review.

With the new ACE Rule, EPA hands over greater power to the states to set their own limits. According to EPA, ACE will reduce greenhouse gas emissions through four actions:

1. Defines a “Best System of Emission Reduction”, for existing power plants based on heat rate efficiency improvements;
2. Provides states with an example list of technologies that may be used in their rules to establish standards of performance;
3. Updates the New Source Review permit program to further encourage efficiency improvements; and,
4. Puts the regulation in Clean Air Act section 111(d) to give states time to develop their own plans.

Opponents of the original CPP Plan say that while limiting greenhouse gas emissions is very important, the makeup of the CPP Plan went too far. It would create burdensome regulation and a tremendous negative economic impact. Coal industry advocates are happy with the ACE Rule in that it will save coal industry jobs. Also, giving the responsibility back to the states will allow states to customize their rules for the conditions and economies around them.

Critics of the new ACE Rule say the new regulations will not nearly reduce the emissions the CPP would have. There is some fear it’ll allow states to write less strict regulations that the power companies will be able to get around. Other say the new rule appears to be an appeasement to the coal industry.

EPA says that replacing CPP with ACE will save $400 million in net benefits and $400 million in compliance burden, will still reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and may reduce carbon dioxide emissions even as much as 33-34% from 2005 which is even more than what CPP projected.

The ACE Rule is available for comment and there will be a public hearing scheduled. The D.C. Circuit Court will also have to determine if it is a suitable replacement for the CPP rule, which is still on hold with the court.