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Sierra Club, City Council Member Martinez Applaud Plan to Curb Carbon Pollution

AUSTIN, TX -- Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a proposal for the first-ever national protections from dangerous carbon pollution from existing power plants. Carbon pollution causes climate disruption and is already costing Texas communities billions of dollars from drought, flooding, wildfires and extreme heat.

This new standard, which is part of the President's Climate Action Plan, will clean up the industries that create the lion's share of carbon pollution in our country. The new protections will also help reduce other life-threatening air pollution including mercury, soot, and smog.

"Today, we applaud President Obama and the Environmental Protection Agency for their move to clean up our air, improve the health of our children and curb the worst effects of climate disruption. These life-saving protections could not come at a more critical time for Central Texans already impacted by record drought, wildfire and flooding," **said Al Armendariz, senior campaign representative for the Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign.**

Nearly all of Texas, including every county in Central Texas, has been designated as a federal disaster area by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture because of the ongoing drought and the impact to Texas farmers and ranchers.

"Reducing climate-disrupting pollution levels across the country and here in Central Texas is essential to protecting our communities from the dangers it poses in the form of extreme weather and hazardous health conditions. The City of Austin has been a leader in clean energy, proven by the fact we are reaching our 2020 renewable energy goals far earlier than projected," **said Austin City Council Member Mike Martinez.** "I am fully supportive of the EPA recommendation to reduce greenhouse gas pollution nationwide, which is why I am co-sponsoring with Council Member Tovo a resolution for Council to emphasize that Austin is ready to set our environmental standards even higher and reiterate our dedication to ending carbon pollution."

In Central Texas, residents have already seen both the human and economic impacts of climate disruption. Estimates show the 2011 Bastrop wildfires and recent Halloween floods in Onion Creek cost the region more than \$467 million in damages, deaths and widespread hardship on families impacted by the extreme weather.

"The new safeguards not only protect our health and communities, but they will also spur innovation and strengthen our economy. By moving to 100 percent clean energy sources, we'll create tens of thousands of American jobs and billions of dollars in new investment. Cutting pollution that harms our communities will also save billions of dollars in health costs, disaster cleanup and disaster recovery costs," **said Armendariz.**

Reports from the Governor's office found that the clean energy industry already supports more than one hundred thousand jobs in Texas and is poised to create thousands more positions as wind, solar, geothermal and energy efficiency projects are developed across the state.

According to April 2014 polling data from Yale University, two-thirds of American adults support the "strict carbon emissions limits on existing coal-fired power plants to reduce climate change and improve public health" and a recent Stanford poll found that 76 per cent of Texans support limits on carbon pollution.

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