



mi air mi health

# RENEWABLE ENERGY AND EFFICIENCY IN MICHIGAN

It is time for Michigan to transition from coal to clean by investing in more renewable energy and by reducing energy waste through energy efficiency. This transition will reduce pollution, save money and lives, and give Michigan cleaner and healthier air.

- **Renewable energy** is energy generated from clean, renewable sources like wind, water and the sun. Renewable energy means producing energy here in our own backyards and employing Michigan workers in the process, rather than sending our money out of state to pay for imported coal and foreign oil.
  - **Energy efficiency:** While the term “energy efficiency” may seem convoluted, it’s actually quite simple—energy efficiency means taking simple steps to reduce energy waste. Whether it’s a homeowner updating an old, inefficient furnace, a hospital installing a new lighting system, or a small-business owner adding insulation, energy efficiency benefits all of us.
- ### Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Saves Money and Lives
- Doctors, nurses, scientists and other health advocates support transitioning away from coal to clean energy because it will reduce illness, rein in health care costs and ultimately save lives.
  - Michigan gets more than half of its electricity from burning coal. Michigan’s coal plants emit dangerous levels of mercury, sulfur dioxide and arsenic, which are linked to heart disease, childhood asthma, lung disease and premature death.
  - Pollution from Michigan’s nine oldest coal-fired power plants has been linked to 68,000 cases of asthma attacks and 180 premature deaths each year in our state, costing us over \$1.5 billion per year in excess health care costs.
  - Renewable energy and energy efficiency are affordable and cost-effective solutions. The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) has already determined renewable energy is cheaper than new coal generation. And for every \$1 invested in energy efficiency, customers avoid \$3.55 in energy costs, according to the MPSC.
  - If Michigan produced just 25% of its energy from renewable sources by 2030, we could reduce annual health damages in our state by more than \$1 billion a year.

#### SOURCES:

- US Environmental Protection Agency, Michigan Public Service Commission, U.S. Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy
- “Public Health Impacts of Old Coal-Fired Power Plants in Michigan,” prepared by Environmental Health & Engineering, Inc. for Michigan Environmental Council, 2011.

## A Healthier and Cleaner Future is Possible

We need policies that put Michigan on track to be an industry leader in clean energy, create jobs, and give us healthier air. Transitioning to clean energy sources and being more energy efficient will improve health, lower health care costs, and save lives.

Here are two ways we can get there:

1. Tell your Michigan legislators that we can and should think of ways to increase the amount of renewable energy and energy efficiency we use in our state. After all, our energy policy can protect our health.
2. The EPA Clean Power Plan will reduce dangerous pollution that causes asthma attacks, as well as heart disease, cancer and premature death. Ask Governor Snyder to support the Clean Power Plan so that we can smooth our transition to clean, renewable energy.



## ABOUT MI AIR, MI HEALTH

The MI Air, MI Health Coalition works to ensure that all Michigan communities have clean, healthy air. We organize health professionals to advocate for policies that improve outdoor air quality, and improve a range of health impacts caused by unhealthy outdoor air and climate change, and reduce the healthcare costs we bear because of unhealthy outdoor air.

## OUR MISSION

MI Air, MI Health is committed to ensuring healthy air for Michigan communities by assessing the health effects of air quality and advocating for the development, implementation, and enforcement of policies to address these issues, recognizing that clean air contributes to a healthy economy.

To learn more, contact Rory Neuner, MI Air, MI Health Coordinator at [rory@miairmihealth.org](mailto:rory@miairmihealth.org).



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