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Trump's 'Dirty Power Plan' won't turn back clock on energy

MADISON, WI — Clean Wisconsin criticized the Environmental Protection Agency's rewrite of the Clean Power Plan Wednesday, saying the new rule does not change the reality that clean energy like wind and solar are more economical than coal and natural gas.

"Energy utilities are already seeing the writing on the wall for coal and natural gas, and they are making the shift to cleaner, cheaper, home-grown wind and solar energy," said Scott Blankman, Clean Wisconsin's Energy & Air Program Director. "Trump's 'Dirty Power Plan' is an attempt to delay the renewable energy transition in Wisconsin and the U.S. Rather than investing time in delaying the inevitable, we should be working to address how quickly we get to 100% clean energy."

While the Trump Administration's plan seeks to prop up outdated energy sources, Wisconsin utilities have already made commitments to embrace clean energy. Xcel Energy and Madison Gas & Electric have both committed to achieving carbon-free or carbon-neutral energy by 2050. Earlier this year, the Public Service Commission approved the Badger Hollow Solar Farm, which will be the largest utility-scale solar project in the Midwest when built.

"Local communities, utilities, and investors understand that wind, solar, and energy storage are the future of energy, and they're making investments that reflect this understanding," said Blankman. "Home-grown wind and solar energy is good for Wisconsin, meaning jobs and capital investments that will boost state and local economies."

Despite the economic benefits clean energy brings to the state, legislators in the budget-writing Joint Finance Committee stripped Gov. Tony Evers' proposal to set goal of achieving carbon-free electricity by 2050. Capitalizing on clean energy will require state elected officials to prioritize wind and solar growth in Wisconsin to keep up with states like Illinois and Minnesota, which have set similar carbon-free energy goals.

"It's critical elected officials in the legislature recognize that the future is in wind and solar and act to make carbon-free energy a reality," said Blankman. "We can't afford for to lag behind neighboring states by not taking full advantage of the economic, environmental, and health benefits wind and solar provide as soon as we can."

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