* I’m here today to discuss how not-for-profit, rural electric cooperatives will be devastatingly affected by the EPA’s existing power plant proposal.
* Affordable, reliable electricity is the lifeblood of every household, business and community in the country. At its core, the EPA’s complex scheme asks American families and businesses to pay more for electricity and use less of it.
* Across the nation, families depend on the lights and the heat to keep running whether temperatures skyrocket or plummet. Reliable electricity is essential to the economic well-being of our nation. Analyses by many of the nation’s reliability watchdogs (including the North American Electric Reliability Corporation) indicate the EPA’s proposal could raise “serious reliability issues.”
* By reducing reliability and increasing costs, this proposal will unfairly hit our member-consumers the hardest.
  + 93 percent of US persistent poverty counties are served by electric cooperatives. These are counties which have had a 20 percent or higher poverty rate for THREE decades or longer. Many in those counties simply cannot afford to pay more for electricity each month.
  + On average, 23% of households served by electric cooperatives earn annual incomes below $25,000.
* As not-for-profit utilities, any increase in costs must be passed along to our member-consumers – those at the end of the line pay the bill.
* At the end of the day, there is no guarantee that the scheme designed by the EPA can actually work. Gambling with the reliability of the grid is not a bet America wants the EPA to make, and the rule must be withdrawn.