**Talking Points for EPA Listening Sessions on Reducing Carbon Dioxide Emissions from Existing Power Plants**

**General Information**

Affordable, reliable electricity has been a key component of the American economic engine for the past 100 years. Coal-generated power has helped keep electricity affordable because it is a domestic, abundant, and affordable resource that currently generates more than 40% of our nation’s electricity.

In 2012, 70% of the co-op generated kilowatt hours came from coal.

Nearly 70% of the co-op owned coal generation was built from1973 to 1987 during the Oil Embargo and Fuel Use Act years when Congress banned the use of natural gas for electricity.

These coal units still have significant remaining useful life. While the best available control technology for pollution reduction was installed when these units were built, co-ops also have spent billions on pollution control upgrades more recently to meet current EPA regulations. In some cases the cost of these upgrades exceeded the original cost of the power plant.

We are concerned how EPA’s regulations will make these existing power plants uneconomical to run, raising power prices and affecting the wallets of millions of fixed- and low-income Americans who already spend a disproportionate share of their income on energy.

**Residential Member-Owner**

My name is XXX and I’m a member-owner of [co-op name] – a **not-for-profit** rural electric utility. I came here today because I’m deeply concerned about the impact these regulations will have on my electricity bill.

It’s been a difficult few years for those of us in my community. It was hard enough to make ends meet and then we saw our take-home pay decrease as the economy declined. Every extra dollar spent on our electricity bill is a dollar not being saved for our children’s college fund, let alone spent on groceries.

In fact, it was expensive to get here today. I live in XXX town and had to drive XX hours to be here today because none of these sessions occur in rural America even though we may see a greater impact than others when it comes to electricity bills.

That’s why I respectfully ask the EPA not to take actions that will increase the cost of energy for hardworking families like mine.

**Farmer/Rancher/Small Business Owner**

My name is XXX and I’m a farmer/rancher/small business owner in XXXX. I’m also a member-owner of [co-op name] – a **not-for-profit** rural electric utility.

I took the time to drive XX hours here today because there are not any listening sessions in rural America and I’m deeply concerned about the impact these regulations will have on my electricity bill both at home and for my farm/ranch/business.

Like many other small businesses in my community, the last few years have been challenging. XX number of people depend on me for employment to provide for their families. And I consider them part of my family.

Just when it looks like the economy is improving, I’m concerned that additional EPA mandates will drive up energy costs and stymie growth.

I respectfully ask the EPA not to take actions that will increase the cost of energy for small businesses like mine.

**Distribution Co-op CEO/Director**

I’m the/a CEO/Board member of [co-op name] – a **member-owned, not-for-profit** rural electric utility. And I drove the XX hours to be with you today because you’re not holding any of these sessions in rural America and I’m deeply concerned about the impact these regulations will have on our ability to provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity to our communities.

First, I want to tell EPA about my rural electric cooperative and why we care about the potential new rules to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants.

We are one of more than 900 **not-for-profit** rural electric utilities that provide electric service to approximately 42 million people in 47 states. We provide electric service to [area/communities]. In our community, [Provide information about the communities you serve such as income level, age distribution, unemployment, etc. that demonstrates your local concerns with rising electric rates.]

We already face higher distribution costs because of lower consumer density and obligation to serve to the “last mile” to make sure that everyone has access to electricity. Electricity generation costs account for **two-thirds** of the total price of electric service that we provide to our members.

Much of the electricity supplied to our member-owners comes from coal and natural gas power plants because they are the base of the 24/7 reliable power our customers deserve.

As you can imagine, we’re concerned about how new EPA regulations will impact these plants and the price of electric service that we provide to our members. That’s why we respectfully ask the EPA not to take actions that will increase the cost of electric service for our members.

**Talking Points for G&Ts**

I am the/a CEO/Board member of [co-op name] – a **not-for-profit** rural electric generation and transmission utility. We are owned by the XX not-for-profit distribution utilities that serve XXX member-owners.

And I drove the XX hours to be with you today because you’re not holding any of these sessions in rural America and I’m deeply concerned about the impact these regulations will have on our ability to provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity to our communities.

The [co-op name] G&T cooperative was created to allow distribution cooperatives more control over power availability and costs. X percent of the generation we provide comes from coal and Y percent from natural gas.

We rely [somewhat/heavily] on coal because we experienced significant growth/demand just as Congress passed the Fuel Use Act and banned the use of natural gas. These coal units still have significant remaining useful life. While the best available control technology for pollution reduction was installed when these units were built, more recently we’ve spent billions more in pollution control upgrades to meet current EPA regulations. In some cases the cost of these pollution control upgrades exceeds the original cost of the plant. As a result, we have outstanding loans on these facilities and must generate adequate revenue in order to repay the loans. As you can imagine, we are concerned about how new EPA regulations will impact these coal plants and the price of electric service that we provide to our members.

[G&Ts could also talk about their power purchases if they are significantly coal or natural gas dependent as well.]

If EPA’s approach causes our electricity rates to rise, it could force the industrial consumers we serve to close their production facilities. This would dramatically impact the jobs in the communities we serve and drive up rates further for the remaining consumers.

We respectfully ask the EPA to recognize and respect that we followed the law when constructing our power plants and cannot afford to switch again with so much investment on the line. Please work with us on a fair solution that will allow us to continue to provide safe, affordable, reliable electric power for our members.