



PublicService Commission &lt;psc@utah.gov&gt;

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**Docket Number: 14-035-114**

1 message

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**Tamara J Ferguson** <tamara.ferguson@usu.edu>

Fri, Jul 31, 2015 at 7:46 PM

To: PSC &lt;psc@utah.gov&gt;

Dear Commissioners:

Earlier in this docket, RMP claimed and the PSC concurred that the social benefits of net-metering cannot be quantified. This ignores the fact that the social costs of CO2 emissions can be, and have been, quantified. I hyperlink the commission to this recently released report (one of many that have analyzed the costs of carbon). The PSC should, therefore, take into account how much CO2 net metering spares RMP from generating — now and based on the projected growth of solar energy.

Sincerely,  
Tamara Ferguson  
Ivins, Utah

*"Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts."*

Daniel P. Moynihan





*Photo: Fintrvlr/Flickr*

# The Social Cost of Carbon

We now know the price we're paying for carbon pollution—and it's way too high.

We know what's driving climate change: the carbon pollution from burning fossil fuels and other sources. But exactly how much damage does each ton of carbon pollution cause when you tally up the harm to crops from drought and heat, property damage from floods and storms, increased rates of asthma attacks and other risks to our environment and health?

The White House did the math this month, pegging the cost of this damage

pollution into our atmosphere, accounting for 38 percent of the U.S. carbon footprint. At \$36 a ton, that comes to a staggering \$73.8 billion in economic costs that rise each year that climate change worsens.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg. It covers only the kinds of damages scientists can count well and economists can put a dollar figure on—but leaves out a lot more. By any measure, though, we're paying too high a price for this dangerous pollution. That's why President Obama's Clean Power Plan is so important.

The plan, to be released in final form shortly, will help cut clean up our dirty power plants and cut the carbon pollution that's driving climate change. It gives states the opportunity to work with local power companies to find the most cost-effective ways to cut the carbon. Some will invest in efficiency, so our families and businesses can do more with less waste. Others will help us get more clean power from the wind and sun. While still others will tune up their generating operations to cut back on carbon emissions.

What's important is that we roll back the pollution that's playing havoc with our climate.

Last year was the hottest since reliable measurements began in 1880, and the first six months of this year have been even hotter, breaking all records for the hottest first half of a year ever recorded.

We know sea level is already on track to rise by perhaps three feet this century. A new study released this week says the increase could be triple that amount, a level that would be catastrophic to our coastal regions and the scores of millions who own property there.

Medical experts say the health threats of climate change are so severe that fighting this widening scourge could be the single-greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century. And Pope Francis has declared that stepping up to this challenge is nothing less than a moral obligation.

We're all paying a price for climate change. The White House has laid it out in dollars and cents. Like any benchmark number, this one's not perfect. We think it understates the costs, and a lot of experts agree.

The number doesn't include, for example, a lot of very real costs, such as the damage carbon pollution is imposing on our fisheries by raising the acidity levels in our oceans; the harm to our forests from increased pest, disease and fire pressures; or the loss of land to rising seas. Climate science, moreover, is complex. We learn more about it every day.

...the price tag, though, is the best estimate we have for the cost based on years of scientific and economic data collection, calculations, and analysis, as well as extensive formal input from industry groups and the public at large.

It provides a baseline value for U.S. agencies that consider the impacts of climate change—and the carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that are driving it—when assessing federal projects or evaluating applications for permits required for various commercial and industrial operations.

Beyond that, as the administration puts the finishing touches on the Clean Power Plan, it's important to know the price we're already paying for carbon pollution. The price is too high to pay.

