

Give Us the Right Tool for the Job, Congress



MESSAGE FROM MANAGER ALAN LESLEY

The federal Clean Air Act was passed to control specific pollutants on a local scale. But in 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court determined that the term “pollutant” in the Clean Air Act could include carbon dioxide and required the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to “make the call” on whether or not to clarify carbon dioxide as a threat.

One of the main authors of the most recent version of the Clean Air Act, U.S. Rep. John Dingell of Michigan, warned that using the law to regulate carbon dioxide, which was never considered by Congress, will result in a “glorious mess.”

Ignoring that concern, late last year EPA announced it would include carbon dioxide in a list of pollutants contributing to climate change to be regulated under the Clean Air Act. It seems that this “glorious mess” could indeed become a reality.

The Clean Air Act in its modern form was originally passed in 1970 to control harmful pollutants such as nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide on a local and regional level. And in every case where these emissions fell under federal regulation, proven technology existed to address the goals of the legislation.

But when it comes to carbon-dioxide emissions from coal- and natural gas-fired power plants, no such solution currently exists. Experts estimate that at least a decade of research on a massive scale on technologies such as

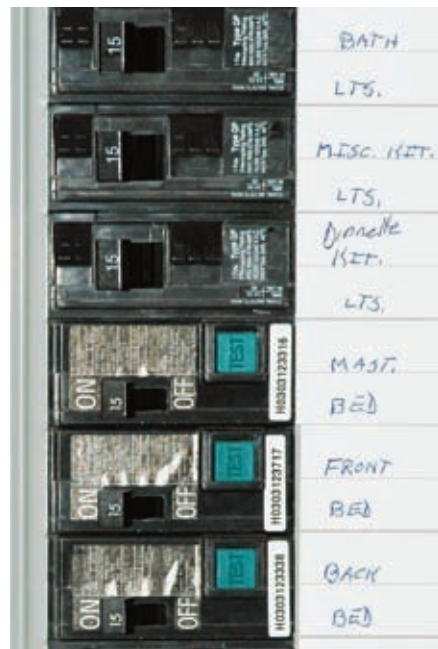
carbon capture and storage must be conducted before a viable approach to limiting carbon dioxide gas from smokestack emissions can be found.

In many ways, regulating carbon-dioxide emissions under the Clean Air Act is akin to using a hammer to tighten a screw. You may eventually get the screw hammered in, but better tools are needed—ones that don’t put your electric bills at risk during these tough economic times.

Electric cooperatives have been fighting to make sure any energy or climate-change policy remains fair, affordable and achievable. Much of this effort so far has been focused on legislation being considered by Congress, but the EPA’s actions have opened a new front in the fight.

Comanche Electric Cooperative is asking you to make your voice heard in preventing the EPA from doing something Congress never intended. Reach out to your elected officials in the U.S. House and Senate, and ask them to support fellow members of Congress who are doing important bipartisan work to prevent EPA from regulating greenhouse-gas emissions under the federal Clean Air Act. Urge them to sign on to the Murkowski-Lincoln resolution (S.J.RES. 26) in the Senate and the Skelton-Emerson-Peterson bill (H.R. 4572) or Pomeroy bill (H.R. 4396) in the House. Together, we can make a stand that will help ensure an affordable energy future—and prevent an economic train wreck. Visit www.ourenergy.coop today to send that message to Congress.

“Affordable electric bills must be at the heart of this debate, and we’re fighting on behalf of consumers,” said Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. “Leaving matters up to unelected EPA bureaucrats is a major step in the wrong direction.”



Labeling breakers can save time and reduce frustration if one trips.

Label Your Circuit Breakers

Label each electrical circuit or fuse in your home’s breaker box so anyone who opens the box knows which one powers specific lights or appliances. If you don’t know which is which, ask an electrician to label the switches for you. You can test them one by one yourself if you have the time.

That way, if you’re having a problem with electricity in a particular room or with one appliance, you can flip the switch that powers just that area—no guesswork. If you see the individual switch is “off,” you can solve the problem by flipping it back on.

One of the simplest ways to label the box is to number each breaker with a permanent marker or small sticker and then attach a list to the inside of the breaker box door with the corresponding detailed information.

AT COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Conservation Matters

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



How Much Is Too Much?

Learn how to estimate your home appliances' energy use to see if it's time to upgrade.

You've had your fridge forever. With the exception of some crumbling parts of the seal, it's in pretty good shape and keeps your food cool. Why worry about budgeting for an upgrade?

Some homeowners forget the impact inefficient appliances have on their monthly power bills. Replacing a refrigerator made before 1993 with a new, Energy Star-rated model could knock \$65 to \$100 off your electricity bill each year. To sweeten the deal, rebates funded by the federal stimulus bill provide further incentives for folks replacing old appliances with new, energy-efficient alternatives.

This leaves consumers with a question when evaluating older appliances: How much energy use is too much? To estimate the energy use of an appliance, use this formula:

Wattage × hours used per day × days used per year ÷ 1,000 = kilowatt-hours (kWh) used annually

You can usually find the wattage of most appliances stamped on the bottom or back of the appliance or on its nameplate. The wattage listed is the maximum power drawn by the appliance. Since some appliances have a range of settings (i.e. hairdryers), the actual amount of power consumed depends on the setting used at any one time.

Here are examples of the range of wattages for common household appliances:

CLOTHES WASHER: 350–500 watts

DISHWASHER: 1,200–2,400 watts (heat drying feature increases energy use)

MICROWAVE OVEN: 750–1,100 watts

REFRIGERATOR (frost-free, 16 cubic feet): 725 watts

Once you calculate how much money you spend to run aging home appliances, compare this to what it would cost to use more efficient models. With federal incentives bringing down the price of an Energy Star-rated refrigerator or clothes washer, the annual energy savings could be worth an up-front investment. There are other benefits, too. For example, not only have clothes washers become 64 percent more energy efficient since 2000, but the tub size has increased by 9 percent. With a new model you can wash more clothes for less money every month!

You can find annual estimated energy costs on the yellow EnergyGuide label on new appliances.



HOW TO FIGURE ENERGY USAGE

You use your 400-watt clothes washer an average of 2 hours a day. Here is how you determine your annual power cost with that device:

Multiply 400 watts times 2 hours per day times 365 days per year and divide by 1,000

$(400 \times 2 \times 365 \div 1,000) = 292 \text{ kWh used annually}$

Calculate the annual cost to use an appliance by multiplying the kWh per year by the electricity rate (10 cents, for example) per kWh used.

$(292 \text{ kWh} \times 0.10) = \29.20 per year

In contrast, one Energy Star-rated 3.8 cubic foot washer model uses 110 kWh a year, yielding a cost of \$11 to power annually. That \$20 annual savings is just in electricity. Energy Star washers also use up to 50 percent less water than older models, resulting in even more savings. In addition, larger tub sizes mean you can use it fewer hours in a year.

A Typical Texas Day



BY SHIRLEY DUKES

I know what you're thinking: "What is a typical Texas day? There's nothing typical about a Texas day!" Well, you are right. Nontypical is what a typical Texas day is! As the old saying goes: "If you don't like the weather right now, wait a few minutes."

Take this past Christmas Eve, for example. We went from a 73-degree day to snow in just a matter of hours! And who would have ever thought it would stick? But stick it did, giving us our first white Christmas in years. And it didn't stop there. We've had snow at least three other times since, one of the biggest snow years in quite a while. And ice! In part of our northern territory, travelers were stranded for hours in bar-ditches and snow drifts awaiting help. As I write this, it is a Tuesday morning in late February. Sunday we wore shirtsleeves, and I got out and rode my bike. Today, it is 32 degrees and snow is coming down as thick as a spring rain. Well, folks, that's typical Texas weather!

Here at Comanche Electric Cooperative, we don't let the weather slow us down. Our crews will work in any weather, rain or shine, sleet or snow! And with the arrival of spring comes the threat of thunderstorms.

No matter what the weather, when the power goes out, so do we. Allow me to take a few moments to tell you a little bit about these wonderful people who go out in all kinds of weather to make sure that your power is restored as quickly as possible: These men and women are your friends and neighbors. They live, work and play alongside you. They are co-op members, and they want the power back on as badly as you do.

Working on a high-voltage line can be a dangerous mission, but these folks do it with a passion and dedica-



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tion that is remarkable. They work in all kinds of weather at all hours of the day and night. They understand the nature of their job, and they are good at it. They adhere to a regular safety-training regimen, because when the job is done, they want to return home to their families—tired, but in the same health in which they left.

Their main goal is to restore power safely to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible, but they will not jeopardize the safety of the storm team or the public. When they come in from a storm restoration effort, they may be soaking wet, frozen to the bone, tired from a long shift, but they are happy and satisfied with a job well done and the fact that they were able to restore power to the members for whom they work. They are a group of men who continually make me proud to be a part of their extended team.

Did you ever notice that when you call in the middle of the night during a storm outage, someone is there to take your call? That's because some of our inside personnel are willing at a moment's notice to jump out of bed and be available to assure you that we are on the job and doing all we can to restore your power.

We know you appreciate the hard work these people do for you—we hear it regularly. You'd be hard put to find another group of people as committed to doing a good job and doing it right.

So the next time ice coats the power lines, or the wind is blowing like a hurricane, or rain is pouring down and lightning bolts are shooting out of the sky, pause and take a moment to consider that there is probably someone out there working to keep your lights on and your coffee brewing. It's a typical Texas day for them.



With Mom, it really is the thought that counts.

So this Mother's Day, why not think ahead and get her something special. (May 9 will be here before you know it!)

Maybe she'd like a book or movie from Borders, a beautiful bouquet from ProFlowers, delicious delicacies from Shari's Berries or Anna's Gourmet Goodies, or an amazing trip from Cruises, Inc. Or maybe a gift certificate from one of the many Co-op Connections businesses.

Use your Co-op Connections Card to save at all these businesses—plus a whole lot more.




Visit www.ceca.coop to see all the great deals.



**The best electric service is
the kind you never even notice.**

At Comanche Electric Cooperative, there's a reason we hire people with a passion for service. And we constantly train and provide them with all of the latest resources—whatever they need to get the job done right. Our mission is to provide much more than reliable electricity—it's to provide peace of mind to all our members.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Looking out for you.

Mom calls me her superhero.

I turn off lights that aren't being used.
And other stuff.

She says we're
saving the planet . . .

But I know it saves her
gobs of money, too.

It's cool being a
superhero.

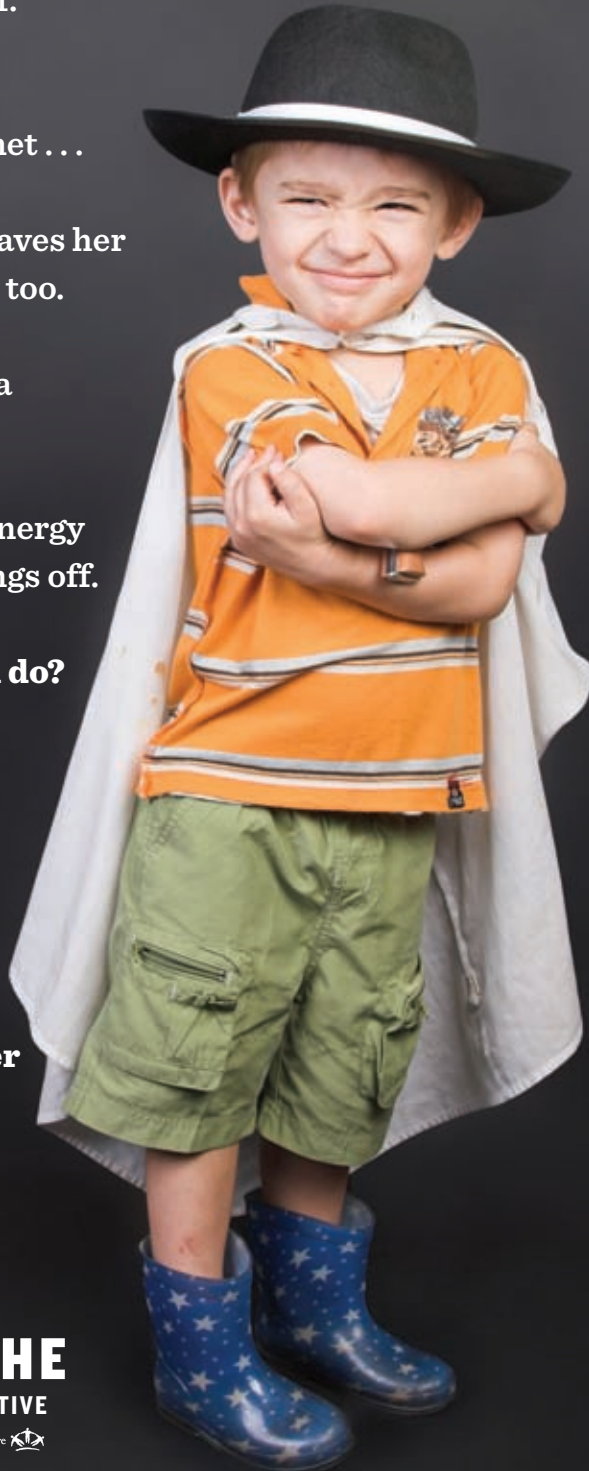
We're saving energy
by turning things off.

What can you do?

Find out how
the little
changes
add up at
**www.Together
WeSave.com.**

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YOUR "LOCAL PAGES"

This section of Texas Co-op Power is produced by Comanche EC each month to provide you with information about current events, special programs and other activities of the cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Shirley at the Comanche office or at sdukes@ceca.coop.