

# EPA Reinforces Commitment to Supporting Reliable, Affordable Coal-fired Electricity

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## Contact Information

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**WASHINGTON** — U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing a rule to revise wastewater limits, known as effluent limitations guidelines (ELG), for steam electric power plants that will help improve grid reliability and lower electricity prices while continuing to support clean and safe water resources. If finalized, EPA's proposal is estimated to reduce electricity generation costs by as much as \$1.1 billion annually, providing cost-savings to American businesses and families.

Today's action builds on the efforts made in 2025 to support reliable and affordable clean coal-powered electricity by extending several wastewater compliance deadlines for coal-fired power plants. EPA is committed to protecting our nation's water resources under the Clean Water Act and providing regulatory certainty for the power sector to continue utilizing domestically sourced coal while adapting to increasing demand.

*"This proposal is critical to advancing the Trump administration's efforts to make electricity more affordable and reliable for all Americans while powering economic growth," said EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin. "The AI and data center revolution is creating an electricity and baseload power demand that cannot be met under the overly restrictive policies of past administrations. The Trump EPA will continue doing its part to address these burdensome regulations on the coal-fired power plant sector that hold American communities back from the new opportunities presented by this new 21st century energy reality."*

The Biden EPA's 2024 Effluent Limitations Standards and Guidelines (ELGs) for steam electric power plants have jeopardized many affordable and reliable baseload power plants at exactly the time when America's renewed economic growth demands more energy. The previous administration's "War on American Energy" raised electric bills for Americans and made our electricity less stable and reliable.

The agency remains committed to protecting water resources through common-sense and workable limits on wastewater discharges from electricity generation. For decades, Americans have benefitted from water quality protections implemented under the Clean Water Act while supporting affordable electricity that strengthens American prosperity. That work will continue as the agency reviews burdensome regulations on the U.S. power sector.

Today's proposal takes a commonsense approach to reverse prescriptive treatment requirements for a highly unique waste stream called unmanaged combustion residual leachate. EPA's proposal would rescind certain one-size-fits-all limits and instead provide needed flexibility for permit writers to set case-by-case, data-driven discharge limits based on treatment requirements for this unique waste stream.

*“The industry is focused on supporting affordable and reliable electricity generation, while protecting our nation’s water resources; the prior rule resulted in early coal retirements that raised electricity prices and harmed grid reliability. The new, revised limits and approach are a welcome first step that continues this administration’s focus on responsible regulation reflecting the realities of what it takes to keep the lights on and electricity bills as low as possible in America,”* **said National Mining Association General Counsel and Sr. VP for Regulatory Affairs Tawny Bridgeford.**

*“We appreciate EPA’s efforts to rescind one-size-fits-all ELG requirements that are unnecessarily prescriptive. This represents another step to help preserve the nation’s coal fleet, which is essential to providing affordable and reliable electricity, especially at a time when electricity demand is exploding. We look forward to working with EPA to ensure the proposal is workable. At the same time, we urge EPA to repeal the 2024 ELG Rule because it is a significant threat to the nation’s coal fleet,”* **said America’s Power President and CEO Michelle Bloodworth.**

*“Electric cooperatives welcome EPA’s proposed revisions to the effluent guidelines, which take a more practical approach to protecting water quality while supporting the reliable, affordable power on which Americans depend. This proposal represents an important step towards helping safeguard grid reliability as electricity demand continues to surge,”* **said National Rural Electric Cooperative Association SVP, Government Relations Louis Finkel.**

*“APPA appreciates EPA considering this issue and looks forward to engaging with the agency as it proposes to rescind the unmanaged combustion residual leachate (CRL) provision in the 2024 Steam Electric ELG rule. Rescinding this provision would remove a legally uncertain and administratively unworkable requirement that would be exceptionally difficult for permitting authorities and public power facilities to implement consistently,”* **said American Public Power Association President and CEO Scott Corwin.**

EPA will accept written comments on the proposal from the public for 30 days. For more details, including how to provide comments, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/eg/steam-electric-power-generating-effluent-guidelines>  
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## **Background**

Steam electric power plants use fuels (such as coal, oil, and natural gas) or nuclear reactions to heat water in boilers, which generates steam. The steam is used to drive turbines connected to electric generators. These facilities may generate wastewater (or effluent) with pollutants and waste heat from their water treatment, power cycle, ash handling and air pollution control systems, and other sources. ELGs are national industry-specific wastewater regulations based on the performance of demonstrated wastewater treatment technologies (often called “technology-based limits”).