



PRESS RELEASE

from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality

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NDEQ Announces Meetings in Nine Communities to Discuss Nebraska Carbon Mitigation Strategy

Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality Director Jim Macy announced that the agency will host 18 meetings in nine communities across the state to discuss the federal Clean Power Plan mandate.

“NDEQ needs to determine how the state will respond to the federal Clean Power Plan, which requires substantial reductions in carbon emissions from power plants,” Macy said. “The purpose of these meetings is to first explain what is being mandated federally, and then to seek the public’s input on the strategy Nebraska should pursue in reducing carbon emissions.”

The federal plan, which was issued August 3, 2015, has set a 40% reduction in Nebraska’s rate of carbon emissions from power plants, based on a 2012 baseline. The federal plan requires initial submissions from states by September 6, 2016. This submittal can include a request for extension, if states demonstrate they are meeting specific criteria in developing a state plan. If an extension is granted, the revised deadline for states to submit a final plan is September 6, 2018. Initial compliance will be determined from 2022 to 2024, with final compliance in 2030.

Macy said that the agency is continuing to work with Nebraska utilities and the interested public to develop a framework for addressing carbon emissions in Nebraska. The objective is to develop a strategy that meets Nebraska’s unique needs. Macy said the next step in the process is to seek broader involvement from the public, which is the purpose of the upcoming meetings.

Meeting dates and locations are:

Broken Bow -- Feb. 16, 2-4 and 6-8 p.m., One Box Convention Center at Cobblestone Inn, West Highway 2

Lexington – Feb. 17, 2-4 and 6-8 p.m., Dawson County Opportunity Center, 1501 Plum Creek Parkway

Grand Island – Feb. 18, 2-4 and 6-8 p.m., Nebraska Extension in Hall County, College Park, 3180 W. US Highway 34

South Sioux City – Feb. 22, 2-4 and 6-8 p.m., Marina Inn, 385 East 4th Street

Omaha – Feb. 23, 1-4 and 6-9 p.m., Malcolm X Memorial Foundation, 3448 Evans Street

Lincoln – Feb. 24, 1-4 and 6-9 p.m., Country Inn & Suites, 5353 N. 27th Street

Valentine – March 1, 2-4 and 6-8 p.m., Niobrara Lodge, 803 East Highway 20

Alliance – March 2, 2-4 and 6-8 p.m. MST, Knight Museum & Sandhills Center, 908 Yellowstone Road

Ogallala – March 3, 2-4 and 6-8 p.m. MST, Quality Inn, 201 Chuckwagon Road

Two sets of meetings will be conducted on the same day at each location, with meetings occurring in the afternoon and evening. At both the afternoon and evening meetings, the first portion will be a poster session format, where people can learn more about the Clean Power Plan and its implications for Nebraska, as well as general energy topics, and talk individually with NDEQ staff about their questions. The second portion of each meeting will begin with a brief presentation by NDEQ, and then will provide an opportunity for public comment. Comments made during the second portion of the meeting will be audio recorded, transcribed, and made part of the public record. The transcribed comments and written submissions will be reviewed and considered by NDEQ as the agency develops Nebraska’s response to the federal Clean Power Plan mandate.

“We hope to accomplish two major goals in these initial meetings,” Macy said. “First is to meet individually with people who have concerns, ideas and questions, to explain where we are at in the process. Second, we want to gather the public’s comments during the second portion of each meeting, so that we can develop an effective common-sense strategy for Nebraska.”

Submitting and Viewing Comments

Macy added that the meetings are just one method of providing comments and finding out more information about the state’s efforts. NDEQ has developed a web page that provides the public the opportunity to submit comments, view comments and to view related documents. The web address is:

<https://ecmp.nebraska.gov/DEQ-CPP>.

Comments that are received prior to March 15, 2016 will be considered as NDEQ develops its initial submittal. However, there will also be opportunity for more public comment in the future, and additional public meetings will be announced as this process moves forward.

Overview web page, with updates

NDEQ has also developed a web page that provides an overview of the process, which will be updated regularly with new information. That site is located at:

<http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/NCMS>.