

RON BARBER
8TH DISTRICT, ARIZONA

COMMITTEES:
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FACEBOOK:
[facebook.com/RepRonBarber](https://www.facebook.com/RepRonBarber)

TWITTER:
twitter.com/RepRonBarber

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0308

WEBSITE:
www.barber.house.gov

1030 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE (202) 225-2542
FAX (202) 225-0378

TUCSON OFFICE:
3945 E. FORT LOWELL, SUITE 211
TUCSON, AZ 85712
PHONE (520) 881-3588
FAX (520) 322-9490

SIERRA VISTA OFFICE:
77 CALLE PORTAL, SUITE B-160
SIERRA VISTA, AZ 85635
PHONE (520) 459-3115
FAX (520) 459-5419

November 21, 2012

The Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

I am writing to express my concerns about the impact the EPA's decision regarding Arizona's Regional Haze State Implementation Plan (SIP) and emissions limits for nitrogen oxide (NOx) will have on Arizona Electric Power Company's (AEP) Apache Generating Station in Benson and my constituents in Southern Arizona.

While I support efforts by Arizona and EPA to reduce emissions that impair visibility at protected national parks and wilderness areas, EPA's Federal Implementation Plan (FIP) significantly threatens the future energy production, employees, and ratepayers of the Apache facility.

Apache supports 260 jobs and serves approximately 150,000 customers located throughout rural southeastern Arizona. The plant is funded by the Rural Utility Service Program created under the Department of Agriculture to provide these vital utility services to rural Americans in underserved areas. One-third of the rural users served by Apache are at or below the Federal Poverty Level.

The estimated cost of implementing EPA's implementation plan for lowering nitrogen oxide emissions would be devastating to the Apache facility and its customers, especially given the relative small size of the utility company. With an estimated cost in excess of \$160 million in new technology to the Apache facility and a very short timeline for implementation, the company estimates that ratepayers could see an increase of up to 20 percent. Placing this disproportionate and undue hardship on rural and low-income Arizonans is unacceptable.

AEP has proposed a cost-effective plan to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) for reducing NOx emissions and its contribution to regional haze by installing upgraded combustion controls. The estimated cost of this technology is \$21 million and would result in a significant reduction in emissions. AEP's plan takes into account the unique challenges of this small, rural utility and reflects the true costs of necessary replacement power and power transmission.

Under the FIP, the Apache Station could be forced to both increase rates and eliminate jobs to meet the required emissions limits. These negative impacts are not in the best interests of my constituents. I am requesting that EPA reconsider this plan and the short timeline imposed on this facility to install new technology and emission controls. I believe that every effort should be made to allow the facility to act to improve visibility over a period of time that will ensure that it can remain viable into the future.

Additionally, I am requesting a meeting to discuss these concerns and how we can best work together to protect the Apache Generating Station and its customers. We appreciate your prompt consideration of this request and look forward to meeting with you at your earliest availability.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Barber". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline.

Ron Barber
Member of Congress