

# Highlights from EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy's Remarks at RFF

On September 25, RFF welcomed Gina McCarthy, administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), for a special Policy Leadership Forum. In her remarks, McCarthy discussed the economic benefits of halting climate change. In a discussion with RFF President Phil Sharp, she touched on topics ranging from the role EPA plays internationally to its proposed Clean Power Plan. A selection of McCarthy's comments from the event follows.

## **On the Worldwide Shift in Public Dialogue about Climate Change**

"The dynamics around climate seem to be changing, not just here in the United States, but internationally. [Climate Week in New York City] was an incredibly positive experience. I think the march was a clear signal that people are getting restless, not about the actions we might take, but they're getting restless in that they need to see leadership here and a response on an issue that they consider to be closed. We need action."

## **On EPA's Role as an International Leader on Climate Change**

"We spend considerable amounts of time working with other countries to try to build up their structure to address environmental protection at many levels. And then we try to share technical assistance and information on new technologies and how to do things in ways that allow them, when they begin to embrace the environmental

challenge, to learn from our lessons in advance—and at a much quicker pace than we were able to do while we were developing these technologies and this understanding."

## **On the Climate Summit 2014**

"It was an incredibly positive moment, I think, and one where [participants] were talking about the tipping point in an entirely different context. Originally, we had been talking about, 'How quickly do we need to act before the climate is out of control?' And this was more, 'I think we're done talking. The tipping point is that we have solutions today. We need to put the solutions into action at this point.'"

## **On the Ability of EPA's Clean Power Plan to Support US Climate Commitments**

"Judging from the tone of the discussion at the United Nations, [the Clean Power Plan] is seen as a very big deal, not only for us in terms of having an aggressive goal, but also the opportunity for our goal to influence how other countries are going to come to the table. I think it's an important step forward, and it's recognized as such."

## **On the Use of "Building Blocks" in EPA's Clean Power Plan**

"We're allowing every state to do what they want in terms of developing their own plans that they can send to EPA and say, 'I can get here this way the best.' We're not prescribing. We're just opening up opportunities and, frankly, it's a result of



both knowing that every state is different and also knowing that climate change has the uniqueness of really being able to be tackled in many, many different ways.”

**On the Importance of Continuing Dialogue about EPA’s Clean Power Plan**

“We’re not slowing down on these conversations because we’re learning a lot. And they continue to be incredibly positive, especially when we have meetings where the energy and environmental folks are at the table. It’s when they go back to their respective corners that we have a less robust conversation.”

**On Public Interest in Climate Change and EPA’s Clean Power Plan**

“I think people are worried and, frankly, I think people really want leadership on

these issues. They want to know that we’re not all in our separate corners duking it out. And so I think that many of the states see enormous value in approaching [the Clean Power Plan] with this broad range of opportunities.”

**On the Market Influence of the Clean Air Act**

“One of the things that’s good about [the Clean Air Act], from a business perspective, is that it does provide a certain path forward. The business industry and markets are always looking for long-term signals. We just gave a very big long-term signal that I believe, and from what I’m hearing, is really opening the door to investments in the United States.”

Visit [www.rff.org/ginamccarthy](http://www.rff.org/ginamccarthy) for a video and complete transcript of the event.