

Ralph Padilla, CEO PRAC of Southern New Jersey
Legislative Testimony
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Good afternoon.

We all know that nuclear power is New Jersey's unrivaled source of clean, carbon-free energy. Good for the air we breathe, providing tremendous amounts of the power we rely on without producing carbon emissions that are harmful to the climate.

As a clean energy workhorse, nuclear energy also is a tool for the environmental.

As the former Chief of the Salem County Prosecutor's Office, Mayor Emeritus of Pittsgrove Township, Salem County and current CEO of the Puerto Rican Action Committee of Southern N.J. (PRAC) I have a clear understanding the value of nuclear energy as the premier clean and carbon free energy of nuclear

At PRAC we actively engage in matters that most affect the social, economic and health well being of our clients. The retirement of Salem and Hope Creek, pulling the plug on 40% of New Jersey's electricity, would lead to a 1-for-1 increase in fossil fuel generation. If these nuclear plants close, we wouldn't use 40% less power. We'd simply turn to other sources.

The American Lung Association reports that poorer people and ethnic minorities often face higher exposure to these kinds of air pollution. Pollutants like ozone can worsen bronchitis, emphysema and asthma, leading to increased medical care and costs. Blacks, Latinos and urban residents are more likely to be affected with asthma symptoms, as are individuals with a family history of the disease.

The bottom line is, because the environmental impacts are greatest in urban areas with larger populations of low-income residents, the loss of the plants could present environmental justice issues.

Nuclear power is critical to achieving New Jersey's clean energy and climate change goals. It's even more important to health of our environment and our children, particular those in urban communities.