



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 11, 2010

Contact:
James Gignac (312) 771-9991
Lauren McGrath (202) 731-4373
Wallace McMullen (502) 228-0016

From Owensboro to Winchester: Groups Challenge Dirty Energy
Permits for new coal plants lack basic safeguards to protect public health

LOUISVILLE, KY -- The Sierra Club and Valley Watch, joined by ratepayers, nuns, outdoors enthusiasts, and other groups have challenged the Kentucky Division for Air Quality on their issuance of three air permits for new coal plants across the state of Kentucky. The plants being challenged include: Kentucky New Gas in Muhlenberg County, Cash Creek in Henderson County, and Smith in Clark County.

“These permit approvals were pushed through just days before new federal air pollution limits took effect. It makes no sense to move forward and construct a fleet of new plants that we know won’t be able to meet the new standards,” said Wallace McMullen, Energy Chair for the Cumberland Chapter of the Sierra Club. That’s bad for both our health and our pocketbooks,” he continued.

From Owensboro to Winchester a growing number of citizens are concerned about continued reliance on coal for their economy and their health. At a recent forum conducted by the Owensboro-based Public Life Foundation attended by over 100 residents from throughout the region, over 60% of participants voted that no more coal plants should be permitted for their region.

Just outside of Owensboro, where one of the three new plants is proposed, a group of Catholic nuns have gathered petitions and organized against the proposed Cash Creek coal gasification plant. We’re concerned that our region already has too much pollution”, stated Sister Michele of Mount St Joseph. “We all agree that job creation is critical in our area, but we also need to consider public health and invest in cleaner industries that will lead us into the future”.

In the Eastern half of the state, East Kentucky Power Cooperative ratepayers are concerned that the Division's failure to uphold strong health standards for the newly permitted Smith plant could have negative consequences for them.

According to a 2009 assessment by Physicians for Social Responsibility, pollutants from coal combustion "affect all major body organ systems and contribute to four of the five leading causes of mortality in the U.S.: heart disease, cancer, stroke, and chronic lower respiratory diseases."

Permitting these three plants would put out significant amounts of pollution regulated by the Clean Air Act, including

- Fine soot (particulate matter), which can cause severe respiratory problems and even death.
- Sulfur dioxide per year, the main cause of acid rain.
- Nitrogen oxides, a key chemical in the formation of ozone pollution, or smog, which harms lungs.
- Mercury, a potent neurotoxin that can cause learning disabilities in infants and young children.

"Kentucky needs to start making the transition to a clean energy economy," said Aloma Dew, a coal miner's grand daughter and Sierra Club member in Owensboro. "All these dirty energy proposals are just trying to apply 19th century thinking in the 21st century. It is time to transition to efficiency and clean renewable energy for the good of our children and for a good economy in our Commonwealth."

The permit appeals have been filed with the Kentucky Office of Administrative Hearings. Copies of the appeal are available on request. For a copy of the appeals email lauren.mcgrath@sierraclub.org