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**NEW HEALTH REPORT PLACES KENTUCKY 4<sup>TH</sup> WORST IN THE NATION**  
**FOR IMPACTS FROM COAL PLANT POLLUTION**

In a landmark report released today, the Clean Air Task Force (CATF) has determined that reducing emissions of fine particle pollution from coal-fired power plants, one of the top contributors of air pollution in the U.S., can have a direct and significant positive effect on public health. "The Toll from Coal," ([http://www.catf.us/coal/problems/power\\_plants/existing/](http://www.catf.us/coal/problems/power_plants/existing/)) the third such study from CATF, follows on their 2000 and 2004 reports and documents the progress in using modern pollution control technologies to decrease emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>), two of the most dangerous byproducts of coal combustion, and charts the progress to date in reducing the death and disease caused by coal-fired power plants.

"These findings show why it is so critical that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency adopt strong measures to clean up these plants," said Conrad Schneider, Advocacy Director of Clean Air Task Force. "We urge EPA to stay focused on protecting public health in the next year." CATF is encouraging EPA to strengthen federal regulations like the Clean Air Transport Rule.

The CATF report lists Kentucky as fourth worst in the nation for deaths attributed to coal plant emissions of particulate matter (soot), with total annual mortality projected at 412 per 100,000 adults, an increased risk of 12.6%. Kentucky is 12<sup>th</sup> worst for overall health impacts from coal plant pollution, with 286 hospital admissions and 539 heart attacks attributed to plant emissions in addition to the mortality figure.

Deborah Payne, Energy and Health Coordinator for the Berea, KY-based Kentucky Environmental Foundation (KEF) said, "The evidence of harm to our health from coal power plants is clear: the greater the emissions, the worse the impacts on our health. Cutting back on pollution through energy efficiency, clean renewable energy and enforcement of environmental regulations leads to better health."

"My teenage son has suffered with asthma for 8 years, and we know all too well the anxiety those hospitalization figures represent," said Melissa Neal, who lives in Estill County. "Those health impact figures for Kentucky are unnecessarily high. I want our state and local governments and utilities to take leadership in reducing harmful emissions from coal plants, to make sure that my son and others who are vulnerable to air pollution can breathe a little easier."

Key findings of the report include:

- Coal-fired power plants remain among the top contributors to fine particle pollution, particularly SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub>, in the country. This pollution is expected to cause over 13,000 premature deaths in 2010, as well as almost 10,000 hospitalizations and more than 20,000 heart attacks per year.
- The highest amounts of power plant-related deaths occurred in the large metropolitan areas of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Pittsburgh and Washington, DC, while on a per capita basis, Johnstown, PA led, followed by Cumberland, MD/WV, Steubenville-Weirton, OH/WV, Altoona, PA and Sandusky, OH, reflecting the reliance in “coal country” on generating electricity from coal-fired power plants.
- Since 2004, SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions have decreased by almost 50%, thanks to the installation of about 130 power plant “scrubbers” and other emission control measures, mandated through a combination of enforcement of the Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) and New Source Review provisions of the Clean Air Act, and state power plant clean-up laws.
- These pollution reductions, which have occurred without noticeably affecting electricity prices or consumer bills, natural gas prices, or the reliability of the power system, will prevent almost 11,000 premature deaths in 2010.
- With existing technology, continued enforcement of existing laws and regulations, and stronger EPA regulation and new federal legislation, fine particle pollutant levels and mortality rates in this country can be driven further down at an accelerating rate. Hundreds of coal-fired power plants do not yet have scrubber technology, so there is still an enormous opportunity to significantly enhance public health.

“Doctors and public health professionals all know that when it comes to poor health, prevention is key,” said Dr. Elizabeth Walker, a health educator in Berea. “The same is true when it comes to preventing unnecessary pollution from coal plants and other pollution sources.”

“In Kentucky, where coal issues are so politically charged, we sometimes forget that good health is a value that we all share,” said Payne. “Protection of our health should remain a top priority when determining energy policy on the state and federal levels.”

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The “Toll on Coal” report can be obtained on the CATF website as above, or via a link on KEF’s website at <http://kyenvironmentalfoundation.org>.

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