

Harmful Effects of Coal Generated Power Plants

The following facts are pieces of information that can be used in testimony, oral or written relating to coal generated energy. Address written public testimony to:

Administrative Law Judge Beverly Heydinger
Office of Administrative Hearings
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Minneapolis, MN 55401

CapX 2020 Lines will rely heavily on coal generated energy from multiple coal burning power plants throughout the Midwest. We demand that a significant amount of power transmission is from renewable, clean, and community based energy--NOT from existing and new coal-fired power plants.

Polluting Effects of Coal

Coal-fired power plants emit large quantities of toxic air pollutants such as lead, arsenic and particulate matter, and are one of the largest sources of man-made mercury pollution in the U.S. These pollutants infiltrate our water supplies, damaging wildlife and humans, and are a major trigger of asthma and respiratory ailments. The mercury problem in the U.S. is so widespread that every year one in six women of childbearing age has mercury levels in her blood high enough to put her baby at risk” –Sierra Club: “The Dirty Truth About Coal” and NRDC

Coal is a Dirty, Non-Renewable Energy Source

"There is no such thing as 'clean coal'. Good stewardship of creation, of the planet that we inherited, suggests that the best place for coal is in the ground, where it is. Note that the “fuel” for renewable energies (sunlight, wind, etc.) is cost-free and it will last practically forever. This is in stark contrast to coal. One reason the cost of coal has been shooting up is that coal is a finite resource requiring increasing efforts for extraction. The notion that the United States has a 200-year supply of economically extractable coal is a myth." -James Hansen of The Earth Institute in a letter to Gov. Tim Pawlenty

Even though coal-fired power plants generate just about half of our nation’s electricity, they account for almost 40 percent of our nation’s carbon dioxide pollution from all sources including transportation. In fact, coal-fired power plants have the highest output rate of carbon dioxide (or carbon intensity) per unit of electricity among all fossil fuels. –Sierra Club “The Dirty Truth About Coal”

Coal Use Must Be Eliminated In Order to Combat Climate Change

According to James Hansen from The Earth Institute and NASA Goddard Institute in a letter to Gov. Tim Pawlenty: "Atmospheric CO2 can be successfully constrained only if coal use is phased out over the next 20 years except where the CO2 is captured and sequestered, so that it does not enter the atmosphere. Coal use must be eliminated unless and until technology is available with near-zero emissions. "

Global Warming Effects in Minnesota: "The range of boreal forests will retreat into Canada and likely cause Minnesota to lose iconic species such as moose and stream trout, if atmospheric CO2 is not stabilized. Minnesota industries of forestry and winter tourism, including skiing, snowmobiling and ice-fishing, depend upon the existing climate." -James Hansen of The Earth Institute

We have already passed the threshold of atmospheric CO2 levels that we should allow to exist over the long-term. The Earth is nearing climate “tipping points” with potentially irreversible effects, including

extermination of countless species, ice sheet disintegration and sea- level rise, and mass dislocation of populations. -Will Steger

Sources: <http://www.sierraclub.org/coal/dirtytruth/>

James Hansen, NASA Goddard Institute and Columbia University Earth Institute Letter to Gov. Tim Pawlenty April 21, 2008

<http://www.nrdc.org/health/effects/coal/coalhealth.pdf>

and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2005," April 2007. Based on calculation of CO₂ emissions from tables 3-1 and 3-3. U.S.

Department of Energy and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Carbon Dioxide Emissions from the Generation of Electric Power in the United States." July 2000.