



Protect Big Bend and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks – Ask EPA to Reduce Haze in our Parks

Background:

Haze causes health problems and degrades visibility in many American cities and scenic areas, including Texas' beloved Big Bend and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. Haze is caused when sunlight encounters tiny pollution particles in the air. Some light is absorbed by particles. Other light is scattered away before it reaches an observer. More pollutants mean more absorption and scattering of light, which reduce the clarity and color of what we see¹

The Clean Air Act requires the state of Texas and EPA to reduce and eliminate this haze. Under EPA's proposed rule, however, **Texas's oldest and dirtiest power plants would be exempted from installing readily available, modern pollution controls** – instead they could purchase emissions allowances from states as far away as Minnesota and South Carolina. **These purchases won't help Big Bend or Guadalupe or clean up the air that Texans breathe.**

Talking Points:

Big Bend and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks—and the Health of All Texans—May Suffer Under EPA's Proposed Rule – The Regional Haze Rule requires outdated coal-fired power plants in Texas to install modern pollution controls to reduce air pollution that obscures the renowned scenic views at Big Bend and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. Under EPA's proposed rule, Texas's oldest and dirtiest power plants would be exempted from installing these proven pollution controls—instead they could purchase emissions allowances from states as far away as Minnesota and South Carolina. These distant emission reductions in other states, rather than Texas, may not protect Big Bend or Guadalupe Mountains as intended by the Rule. Moreover, the same air pollution from coal-fired power plants that causes haze also harms public health.

EPA's Proposed Rule Would Jeopardize the Overarching Goal of the Regional Haze Rule By Prematurely Exempting Texas Power Plants from the Requirements of the Rule – The Regional Haze Rule requires EPA to ensure that the regional haze plan for Texas makes reasonable progress toward reducing and eliminating human-caused haze at Big Bend and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. The proposed rule, however, piecemeals the analysis under the Regional Haze Rule and prematurely exempts Texas power plants from the Rule without any consideration of the overarching natural visibility goal. If Texas coal-fired power plants are exempted from the Regional Haze Rule's requirement to install proven and readily-available pollution controls, the achievement of natural visibility conditions at Big Bend and Guadalupe Mountains will very likely be delayed for decades, contrary to the purpose and intent of the Rule.

If You Can See Air Pollution, the Air Is Not Safe to Breathe – The same air pollution from coal-fired power plants that causes haze also harms public health. Visitors to Big Bend and Guadalupe Mountains –and Texans everywhere – deserve the clean air resulting from the installation of modern pollution controls at Texas’s coal-fired power plants under the Regional Haze Rule.

Tips for Writing Comments:

- Tell EPA why Big Bend and Guadalupe Mountains are important to you. Do you hike, camp, or recreate there? If so, include this information.
- Personalize your comments. EPA needs to know excusing coal plants from polluting is unacceptable, but make sure you include information about why you care about clean air and our National Parks.
- Individualized comments are always stronger than petitions or form letters. Again, personalize your comments and ask your friends, family, and networks to do the same.

Will you submit a comment to EPA requesting that the rule be improved? Sample comments can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/7l6bq94>

**Comments should be identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2011-0729 and submitted by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>
- E-mail a-and-r-docket@epa.gov
- Mail (EPA Docket Center, Environmental Protection Agency, Mailcode 6102T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460), or
- Hand delivery (EPA Docket Center, Environmental Protection Agency, Room 3334, 1301 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC).

¹ <http://www.epa.gov/visibility/what.html>