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For Immediate Release

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EnviroPower Pushes Ahead With Dirty Coal Plant: Sierra Club Files Suit to Require Cleaner Alternative

Chicago: Today Sierra Club filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois to stop EnviroPower from constructing a huge coal-fired power plant in Franklin County, Illinois. Sierra Club is seeking a court order requiring EnviroPower to obtain a new air permit and install modern pollution controls on its proposed power plant.

“EnviroPower’s outdated power plant proposal threatens the health of Illinois’ families and the state’s economy,” says Verena Owen, Chair of Sierra Club’s Clean Air Campaign. “EnviroPower’s refusal to build a clean, modern power plant gives us no choice but to seek a court order that stops construction until EnviroPower obtains a new permit that protects the health of our families.”

Illinois EPA issued EnviroPower an air permit in 2001. By its terms, the permit expired in January 2003 when the company failed to break ground and undertake a continuous program of construction at its proposed Franklin County site. After years of inactivity, EnviroPower announced in late 2004 that it was planning to begin construction. Sierra Club promptly notified EnviroPower in writing that before it could begin construction of the region’s largest new source of air pollution in decades that it needed to obtain a new and updated air permit. EnviroPower did not respond to Sierra Club’s letter.

“Since EnviroPower received its air permit four years ago there have been significant technological advances in pollution controls for new power plants,” said Bruce Nilles, attorney for Sierra Club. “At a minimum, EnviroPower must install modern pollution controls and meet the same public health protections being achieved at other power plants already operating in the United States.”

“It is a tragedy when we have to file a federal lawsuit to stop EnviroPower from building an outdated coal plant that threatens our health and quality of life,” said Kay Tippy, a Southern Illinois Sierra Club member. “EnviroPower’s proposal would dump more mercury pollution in the lakes where I like to fish. Companies cannot be allowed to sacrifice the health of my family and my community, particularly when smarter, cleaner choices are readily available.”

The Department of Energy estimates that 114 coal-fired power plants are proposed across the United States, including 14 in Illinois. The majority of these projects propose to use outdated combustion technologies. Sierra Club is working with its allies to raise awareness about the threat posed by this “Coal Rush” and highlighting safer alternatives to meet the Nation’s energy needs.

Reducing air pollution is good for Illinoisan’s health and the state’s economy. According to Vice-President Cheney’s National Energy Report, it costs approximately \$300 to remove a ton of sulfur dioxide with modern pollution controls. The benefits of reducing a ton of sulfur dioxide are estimated to total \$7,300, including reduced medical costs for treating asthma and lung cancer.

HEALTH FACTS: From the website of the Clean Air Task Force:

- US EPA's consultants estimate that air pollution from coal-fired power plants causes 1,356 premature deaths, 2,361 heart attacks, 195,698 lost work days and 33,986 asthma attacks in Illinois annually.
- Children are the most susceptible to power plant pollution. In Illinois 2.7 million children live within 30 miles of a power plant, the area where the greatest health impacts occur.
- Coal plants emit forty-one percent of the United States’ mercury pollution. The Illinois Health Department has issued a fish consumption advisory for every waterbody in Illinois because of high mercury levels in the fish. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that causes brain damage, reduces IQ, and is linked to autism. A Mt. Sinai University study projected that mercury pollution costs the economy \$1.8 billion annually in lost productivity.

Sierra Club is a non-profit conservation organization with 28,000 members in Illinois working to restore healthy air across the state, to protect its lakes, rivers and streams from mercury pollution, and to reduce global warming pollution. Sierra Club is represented in this litigation by the law firm of Cullen Weston Pines & Bach, LLP .

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