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Two Elk Must be Accountable to Wyomingites Outdated, decade-old Permit poses risks to local communities and state

(Cheyenne, WY) The proposed Two Elk power plant near Wright, Wyoming has neither begun nor continued construction, and the terms of its air permit are based on information that is badly outdated according to a lawsuit filed today by the Sierra Club.

“Making sure that air permits are current and use the best available information and technology should be a priority,” said Brad Mohrmann, Wyoming associate regional representative for the Sierra Club. “The people of Wyoming should all be concerned that our health and environment could be placed at risk by this plant.”

Two Elk Generation Partners, Limited Partnership a subsidiary of the North American Power Group, received a permit allowing it to construct a coal-fired electric generating station in February 1998. Currently no meaningful construction has taken place, although the company has received approximately \$450 million in tax-exempt bonds from the state.

If built as proposed, the plant will spew an estimated 3 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year, contributing to global warming. The plant will also emit thousands of tons of other pollutants that contribute to haze and respiratory problems. Since Two Elk received its permit, two other coal-fired power plants have begun construction in Campbell County, adding to the community’s pollutant load.

The suit, filed in the federal district court in Wyoming, points to provisions in the Clean Air Act that ensure permits for new sources of air pollution are based on current information. A permit-holder must promptly begin construction of the permitted facility, and continue construction of the facility without substantial interruption; if the permit-holder fails to do so, the permit is no longer valid.

"Any coal-fired power plant is going to be dirtier than alternative sources of energy, said Elena Saxonhouse of the Sierra Club’s environmental law program. “But even by the standards of coal-fired power plants, this one is outdated. After a decade on the shelf, it’s time to reevaluate whether Two Elk makes sense for the health and economy of Wyoming."

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