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### **Arizona Groups Urge TEP To Divest From San Juan Coal Plant**

TUCSON - A coalition of Arizona community groups and businesses today called on Tucson Electric Power (TEP) to divest from the out-of-state San Juan Generating Station, a coal-fired power plant, and instead to commit to local, clean energy solutions like rooftop solar.

Over the past few weeks, support for continued burning of coal at the San Juan Generating Station has evaporated as admissions by the Public Service Company of New Mexico's (PNM) have revealed serious financial risks for the future of the plant. Earlier this month, the home city of the plant, Farmington, New Mexico, abandoned its plans to acquire an increased portion of the plant due to reliability concerns and the huge costs that would be passed onto the community. Other New Mexico stakeholders have also pulled away from an agreement that would continue PNM's use of coal at the plant, citing the overall uncertainty about San Juan's operations. TEP owns half of one unit of the plant, which presents huge financial risks to local Tucson ratepayers if the utility continues its investment in the expensive, outdated coal-fired power plant.

“Our community faces enormous threats if TEP leads us down a path of continued reliance on coal at the San Juan Generating Station,” **said Dan Millis, Tucson organizer for Sierra Club's Grand Canyon (Arizona) Chapter.** “By continuing our reliance on an expensive out-of-state coal plant, TEP is locking our community into a future of more coal and expensive rate hikes that will threaten the pocketbooks of families in our region. It's time for TEP to protect ratepayers here in Arizona by getting out of a dirty, expensive out-of-state coal plant and investing in local clean energy such as solar.”

“We strongly encourage TEP to divest from the San Juan plant. Coal is an energy source of

the past. TEP should invest in clean, renewable energy sources that will sustain our future,” **said Rev. Lisa McDaniel-Hutchings, Co-Executive Director, Unitarian Universalist Justice Arizona Network (UUJAZ).**

The future of coal at the San Juan Generating Station has grown increasingly uncertain in recent weeks as more costs and challenges continue to arise, including the uncertainty of where the plant will get its coal after 2017. Last month, TEP in Arizona announced that it would not purchase the San Juan coal mine that supplies the San Juan Generating Station. In addition, PNM announced that the total bill for their plan to increase reliance on dirty coal and other expensive fuels had jumped by over \$1 billion, with those costs likely being passed onto local ratepayers. This comes just weeks after PNM introduced a rate proposal that if approved would result in nearly a \$10 per month increase to the average residential home bill due to utility’s plans to continue burning coal at the plant for the foreseeable future.

“The Watershed Management Group supports divestment from coal-fired power generation in order to prevent additional financial burden on communities from short and long-term health and environmental impacts due to air and water pollution from mining coal and energy production,” **said Watershed Management Group Program Manager Kieran Sikdar.**

“At a moment when investors are becoming increasingly savvy about energy sources, opting to locate in areas that display a forward-looking, 21<sup>st</sup> century mentality, TEP needs to take steps to ensure that all its energy sources reflect sound science and ethical choices,” **said Madeline Kiser with the Southern Arizona Green for All Coalition.**

The local calls for TEP to divest from the San Juan Generating Station come at a critical time when the New Mexico Public Regulatory Commission recently concluded hearings on PNM’s proposal, which generated strong opposition from New Mexico faith leaders, public health groups, clean energy advocates, environmental organizations, and more. Earlier this week, a coalition of New Mexico community groups called on the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC) to reject the plan from PNM that would extend the utility’s commitment to the San Juan Generating Station coal plant, thereby threatening the health and financial security of New Mexico families across the state for years to come.

“In addition to increasing the cost of electricity, we must not forget the many hidden costs of burning coal in our communities,” **said Dr. Barbara Warren with Arizona Physicians for Social Responsibility.** “These include the health care and human costs of asthma, chronic

lung disease, and cardiovascular diseases associated with coal emissions exposure, the risks of birth defects and neurological diseases in children who are exposed to coal ash produced by burning coal, and our health insurance and lost work day costs which increase with the rising incidences of these illnesses."

"Coal pollution in the Four Corners harms our climate, local families, and endangered species," **said Taylor McKinnon with the Center for Biological Diversity.** "The time to transition to clean, renewable energy is now."

Other groups and companies who joined the coalition of organizations calling for TEP to divest from the San Juan Generating Station include Tierra Y Libertad Organization, Robert Bulechek Energy Management, Borderlands Brewing Co., Solar Possibilities Consulting, Sustainable Tucson, Casa Maria Tucson, [350.org](http://350.org) Tucson, Sky Island Alliance, Wild Earth Guardians, and Great Old Broads for Wilderness - Phoenix/Tucson Broad Band.

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