

SUSTAINABLE RESISTANCE

AMERICA'S TRANSITION FROM COAL TO CLEAN CLEAN ENERGY IN THE AGE OF TRUMP



Reporting America's Grassroots-Driven Shift from Fossil Fuels to Clean Energy

Coal Plants Retired: 258 (+1)

Coal Plants Targeted: 265

We have a repeat of the last Sustainable Resistance newsletter today with another coal plant retirement announcement - [this time in Greenwood, Mississippi](#). Much like the Erickson coal plant from the last newsletter, Greenwood's Henderson Station coal plant was an aging, dirty coal-fired power plant that was no longer economical, faced the picket signs, lawsuits, and public comments from irate local public health advocates, and is also going to be permanently retired in 2018. **Henderson's announcement marked the tenth coal plant retired in 2017, the ninth retirement since Trump was inaugurated, and the [258th coal retirement](#) by the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign.**

In addition to these announcements, the Beyond Coal coalition also squashed the [last remaining coal export terminal proposal in the Pacific Northwest](#). For years, American coal executives had planned on using future coal sales to east Asia to prop up their declining balance sheets at home as our campaign picked off their dirty coal plants one-by-one -- increasingly replacing them with clean energy resources like solar, wind, and energy efficiency.

As of 2010, there were six coal export terminal proposals submitted in Washington and Oregon for approval to ship coal from Montana and Wyoming to pollute the planet on the other side of the ocean. However, organizers in the Pacific Northwest were hip to this scheme from the get-go and stepped up with a sustained, well-coordinated campaign that beat back each one of them. The last proposal standing was deemed dead after the Washington Department of Ecology denied a necessary water quality permit for the proposed Millennium Bulk Terminals coal export facility in Longview, Washington, along the Columbia River. The news doesn't stop there either:

- In a major court decision that will have wide ranging impacts across the federal government, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver ruled that the Bureau of Land Management had to reassess its analysis of the climate impacts of expanding two massive coal mines in Wyoming's Powder River Basin (PRB), after it's initial logic proved laughably insufficient. [This ruling sets a significant precedent](#) that federal agencies must do in-depth climate analyses for fossil fuel projects (nothing quick and on the back of a napkin), which will likely prove a major impediment to Trump climate denying department heads who prefer to ignore, obfuscate, or hide from the issue whenever possible. It will also be a useful tool for environmental lawyers of all stripes

who plan to use the ruling to force federal agencies and departments to take climate into account when making major decisions.

- Staying out West, the Billings Gazette in Montana reported that [the enormous Colstrip coal plant was edging towards retirement](#), writing that the power plant's largest owner would be "financially ready to shutter the entire coal-burning facility by 2027." The plant's rapid descent from one of the largest, most profitable coal plants in the west, to a lumbering anachronism in the modern energy market is in no small part due to the hard work of Beyond Coal organizers and allies in Washington State. They've been strongly pushing Puget Sound Energy (the majority owner of Colstrip) to transition away from coal and toward clean energy for years, and their work is paying off now in a big way.
- Jumping to the Midwest, you'll find another coal plant teetering on retirement in Marquette, Michigan, where the [local Board of Light and Power found that the Shiras coal-fired steam plant may no longer be cost-effective](#). It's another situation where 19th century coal technology can't compete in the fast moving, 21st century energy marketplace that puts a high value on flexibility, cost, and cleanliness. This, coupled with the local community's opposition to the plant's continued operation, suggests a safe bet that Shiras' days are numbered.
- Across the Great Lakes, the Illinois team dropped a bombshell report finding that the City Water Light and Power (CWLP) of Springfield lost millions of dollars for its customers since 2008 in [the continued operation of its Dallman coal plant](#), subsequently prompting a flurry of media attention on why the plant remained open when clean energy resources, like wind power, are readily available to take its place. The debate over Dallman's future is heating up, and the Illinois Beyond Coal team eager to replace the plant with clean energy.
- Coal plants like Dallman don't just exist in the midwest either. Back in September, Sierra Club and Synapse Energy Economics released another report that found similar economic problems with the J.K. Spruce Power Plant in San Antonio, Texas. [The report found that Spruce has lost millions of dollars in the last five years and will continue to do so indefinitely into the future](#). It also found that replacing the power with clean energy resources like wind and solar would be more cost effective. Texas' Beyond Coal team is similarly working hard to bring the utility to its senses to invest in cheap, clean energy instead of propping polluting coal.
- Swerving to the mid-Atlantic, the Free State of Maryland [finally sued the EPA for failing to act](#) on a petition that required power plants in five upwind states to reduce their toxic air pollution. The land of blue crabs, Old Bay., and the Charm City was fed up with polluting coal plants from Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and other states for not having installed pollution controls to prevent their noxious fumes from bellowing across Maryland's borders. EPA has remained silent until now, but something tells me we'll be hearing from them pretty soon.

- Driving straight down I-95, we come to our final stop in Florida, where [the St. Johns River Power Park \(read: dirty coal plant\) retirement was approved](#), setting the stage for its final day of operation on January 5, 2018. The lungs of the tens of thousands of people who live around the coal plant will surely not miss the facility or its dangerous pollution.

That's a wrap! See you in two weeks!