

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, September 29, 2020

Contact:

Vanessa Ramos, vanessa.ramos@sierraclub.org, (512) 586-1853

Vistra Announces Coal Retirements in Illinois, Ohio with No Plans for Remaining Texas Coal Fleet

Vistra Continues to Operate Martin Lake, Top Sulfur and Mercury Polluter in the U.S.

Austin, TX - Texas based Vistra Energy announced plans today to accelerate its transition to clean energy generation by retiring all the coal plants owned by its subsidiaries in Illinois and Ohio. In a move intended to reduce the utility's outsized climate impact, the announcement targets more than 6,800 megawatts (MW) of coal based electricity generation, which is the equivalent a year's worth of carbon emissions from 10,380,659 passenger vehicles.

Vistra announced plans for new solar and storage developments, primarily in Texas, prompting advocates in Illinois and Ohio to redouble calls for state level energy transition planning and policy. Vistra made no changes to its Texas coal fleet, which includes the Martin Lake coal plant; the nation's largest source of sulfur dioxide pollution and mercury pollution. Martin Lake is the source of ongoing violations of sulfur dioxide public health standards.

The remainder of Vistra's coal fleet is located in Texas, with no proposed retirement date. This includes Martin Lake, the nation's largest source of sulfur dioxide and mercury pollution. All three states continue to have considerable generation from coal fired plants even with today's announcements, which leaves lingering concerns for the Sierra Club.

In response to today's announcements, Chrissy Mann, Sierra Club's Senior Campaign Representative for the Beyond Coal Campaign in Texas released the following statement:

"Today's coal retirement announcements from Vistra for Illinois and Ohio mark yet another huge step away from unnecessary reliance on coal to power homes, businesses, and industry across the Midwest. Unfortunately, Vistra continues to operate 3 super polluters in Texas - Martin Lake, Oak Grove and Coletto Creek - representing all of Vistra's remaining coal assets.

Vistra's announcement is a significant step toward cleaner air in Illinois and Ohio, but it ignores the deadly conditions created by its Texas coal plants. A just and equitable plan to reduce carbon emissions requires consideration of communities harmed most by Vistra's reliance on fossil fuels, and those same communities should be the architects of the clean energy transition. We call on Vistra to build on its announcement today with concrete plans to phase out its Texas coal plants and to engage Texas communities in transition."

In response to today's announcements, Misti O'Quinn, Sierra Club's Organizing Representative for the Beyond Coal Campaign in Texas released the following statement:

“Martin Lake is the worst sulfur dioxide and mercury polluter in the entire country and Vistra has made no commitments to address this dangerous pollution locally in Texas. Movement toward the increased production of clean energy is commendable, but the pollution created in east Texas is currently still a significant health hazard for communities from Rusk County to Dallas County.”

###

About the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3.5 million members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person’s right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit www.sierraclub.org.