

## Illinois Power Plant Communities at Risk ...

**as more closed coal plants face demolitions without adequate transparency and state oversight.**

- Once power plants are closed, owners often demolish power plants to prepare sites for repurposing or sale. “Dust from an event like this is almost cataclysmic,” experts warned<sup>1</sup> Chicago City officials before the demolition of the Crawford power plant via explosives.
- In Illinois, these demolitions are subject only to asbestos regulations and local requirements that vary across municipalities, leaving Illinois communities at risk and unprepared to oversee these massive industrial explosions.
- In April 2020, the owner HILCO imploded the smokestack at Crawford Generating Station, a closed coal-fired power plant in Chicago, causing a massive cloud of dust<sup>2</sup> to spread over the adjacent neighborhood Little Village. Residents received a minimal warning and were sheltering in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The botched demolition of Crawford, with documented failures of both HILCO and Chicago City officials to adequately protect Little Village residents, demonstrates the obvious need for state oversight and uniform requirements for public engagement and health protections.
- CTI Development (a subsidiary of Commercial Liability Partners), the Wood River Power Plant owner, denied the communities around the Wood River power plant all attempts to engage with them before the demolition of the power plant and smokestack in Spring 2021. A different subsidiary of the same company demolished a smokestack<sup>3</sup> at a power plant in Ohio, dropping parts of the stack into the river.



## We Need To Act Now

- The Crawford and Wood River demolitions are among Illinois' most recent demolitions. Four coal plants closed in 2019, and of the remaining coal plants, seven have closure dates in the next five years, and the rest are subject to emissions reductions and retirement dates in CEJA.
- Shuttered power plants remain at Canton, Coffeen, Fisk, Havana, Hennepin, Meredosia, and Oakwood. This year, the power plants in Bartonville, Joppa, Romeoville, and Waukegan will close.

## Bill Outcomes - Transparency & Community Protection

- Power plant operators must give advance notice of power plant demolition and prompt updates when demolition plans change.
- Communities will engage with power plant owners before demolition at a public meeting with an opportunity to ask questions.
- Using language modeled from a Chicago ordinance enacted after the Crawford demolition disaster, fossil-fuel plant demolition plans with accurate air quality monitoring, dust mitigation, emergency plans, and site cleanup plans are required.
- Polluters will provide the EPA with the resources to ensure air quality plans protect communities by paying reasonable fees. Fines are assessed on companies who violate the Environmental Protection Act during a demolition.
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<sup>1</sup> <https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/OIG-Fourth-Quarter-2021-Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qebbuOrgfR8>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/i-team/why-did-beckjord-smoke-stack-fall-into-the-ohio-river-and-when-will-debris-be-cleaned-up>