

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 25, 2021

Media Contact: Vanessa Ramos, vanessa.ramos@sierraclub.org

View as [webpage](#)

CPS Energy Fails New National Utility Survey on Climate Action

Board's refusal to phase out coal is responsible for a devastating score of 6 out of 100.

SAN ANTONIO—The Sierra Club released a [groundbreaking report and research tool](#), which grades the top 50 utilities that generate the most electricity from coal and gas across the country based on their plans to retire coal plants, stop building new gas plants, and invest in clean energy - allowing readers to judge each utility's climate progress and how it compares to what science demands. According to the report, which was co-authored by [Dr. Leah Stokes](#) of University of California, Santa Barbara, notes that many of these fossil-fuel heavy utilities that made "carbon neutral" pledges received a failing grade because they are not retiring their coal and gas plants fast enough to avoid the worst impacts of the climate crisis. Included in the report and receiving a failing grade is San Antonio's own CPS Energy.

According to this report, CPS Energy receives a failing score of 6 out of 100. While CPS Energy received positive credit for the recently issued Request for Proposal (RFP) for an impressive 900 MW of solar, no credit was received in the scoring for the 500 MW of "all-source" firming capacity in that same RFP because a resource has not yet been identified. CPS also has not ruled out gas as a resource.

"CPS Energy's low ranking in this report is not surprising given that the utility has no definitive plans for closing the Spruce Coal Plant," said **DeeDee Belmares, an organizer with Public Citizen**. "Utilities across the nation are planning for coal plant retirements because of the economic and health impacts on their community. CPS and the city of San Antonio leadership need to make plans to close the coal plant because the pollution is hurting our community especially low income families of color. It can no longer stall on this climate disaster."

"[The Dirty Truth About Utility Climate Pledges](#) report and [utility tracker website](#) gives CPS Energy customers the ability to compare how our hometown power company stacks up in meeting climate goals over this decade," said **Greg Harman, Sierra Club clean energy organizer**. "While folks in San Antonio have been working for years to get CPS to plan a path off of coal, the leadership at our City-owned gas and electric utility have consistently refused to do what is best for working families and workers."

“They claim to abide by a ‘People First’ philosophy, yet they seem most interested in a certain class of people—specifically, those sitting at the head of the table at the Chamber of Commerce banquets,” Harman said. “Without CPS making meaningful commitments now, our City has no chance of meeting its own carbon-reduction targets by 2030, much less the steeper reductions that are required, as evidenced by the unraveling of global systems all around us.”

CPS Energy’s refusal to commit to a retirement date for their significant coal operations is the reason for the very low score. This report’s scoring metric reflects the reality that climate science demands that every utility retire all of their coal plants by 2030, immediately cease building new gas plants, and aggressively build out clean energy resources to fill in the gap. In fact, if CPS Energy commits to retiring all of its coal operations by 2030, as climate science demands, they would jump from the bottom quarter of the rankings to the top half.

“Over 14,000 local residents have spoken and said the time is now to move away from generating energy from the Spruce coal plant, and collectively decide where we get our power from,” said **Lexy Garcia, regional field coordinator with Texas Rising, speaking of a recent petition to move the utility’s governance structure to the San Antonio City Council.** “A coal plant that is located in an 80% non-white area, and in a city where asthma is the most prevalent chronic disease, has resulted in our energy decisions constructing abject environmental racism. This is a violent structural problem, that will require a bold, immediate pivot away from coal if we want a liveable future for all.”

###

About the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3.8 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](http://www.sierraclub.org).

More about the report:

In addition to [The Dirty Truth About Utility Climate Pledges report](#), Sierra Club also launched an [interactive website](#) which allows the public to look up their utility’s grade, its coal plant retirement schedule (if one exists), its planned gas plant capacity, and its investments in clean energy. The website also includes a national map to help users look up their service area and a digital dashboard for researchers, energy analysts, and media partners to keep track of each utility’s progress over the next decade.

The report and dashboard sources its information from utilities' long-term energy plans—known as [Integrated Resource Plans \(IRPs\)](#), the Energy Information Administration, S&P Global Market Intelligence, and major individual announcements from the 50 utilities that generate the most electricity from coal and gas. Those 50 worst offenders include investor-owned utilities, power authorities (like the Tennessee Valley Authority), generation and transmission co-ops, and large municipal utilities, like CPS Energy. In total, it examines plans for 79 operating companies owned by 50 unique parent companies.