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EPA Hosts Hearing For Proposed Plan That Will Increase Air Pollution Across Texas

Proposed EPA haze plan yet another attempt to provide regulatory lifeline to Texas' dying coal industry

AUSTIN – Today, the EPA hosted a [public hearing](#) to get feedback on a new haze proposal [announced last month](#) that is another attempt to scrap federal clean air protections in favor of allowing Texas' aging and uncontrolled coal plants to pollute at the same, or even increased, harmful levels. The deadline for public comments on the plan is Oct. 26, 2018.

Under a Clean Air Act protection called the Regional Haze Rule, states are required to develop plans to clean up pollution and improve air quality at national parks and wilderness areas. But for more than a decade, Texas put forth weak state plans that would do nothing to clean up the air in the state, which forced EPA -- under a court order issued during the Obama Administration -- to take control of the planning for pollution control in Texas.

A Obama-era haze rule from January 2017 would have reduced dangerous sulfur dioxide pollution from Texas coal plants by approximately 194,000 tons per year. This new plan allows more pollution from these plants than they produced in 2016, even proposing a credit-trading program that would allow the owners of already-retired coal plants in Texas to transfer their pollution credits to other coal plants.

At the hearing, Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Senior Campaign Representative Chrissy Mann read [the following statement](#):

"We rely on EPA to effectively apply the nation's environmental laws. I am here asking that you do just that and not adopt this proposal, and instead adopt a haze plan that actually requires pollution reductions to protect our special places and the people that visit them. Texas coal-fired power plants are particularly bad actors with respect to sulfur dioxide pollution because a majority of Texas plants lack modern scrubbers, which have been installed in hundreds of other facilities around the country. In fact, the prior January 2017 EPA proposal required many of Texas's largest and dirtiest plants to meet emission limits for sulfur dioxide consistent with modern "scrubbers." This proposal [we're commenting on today], as EPA admits, is essentially identical to the unlawful final plan EPA adopted without notice and comment last year. That final plan was bad then and it is bad now. "

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About the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is America's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3 million members and supporters. In addition to helping people from all backgrounds explore nature and our outdoor heritage, 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.