

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Matt Johnson, matt.johnson@sierraclub.org, 773-259-5011, Communications Manager, Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter

Texas' Monticello Coal Plant Announces Plans To Close

"One of America's Dirtiest Coal Plants" Will Retire in January 2018

Irving, TX -- The energy company Luminant today announced plans to retire its massive Monticello coal plant in January 2018. This plant, in the Mt. Pleasant community of Titus County, Texas, is currently one of the largest and dirtiest coal plants remaining anywhere in the United States.

With this announcement, Monticello becomes the 259th coal plant to retire or announce to retire in the U.S. since 2010, and means the U.S. is just three plants away from retiring or announcing to retire half of the coal plants that were operating just seven years ago. Clean air advocates cited this as further evidence of an "unstoppable shift" away from dirty coal and toward clean energy.

As a result of Sierra Club's legal advocacy, the plant was designated as violating health-based air quality safeguards for dangerous sulfur dioxide. This is currently the subject of a federal clean air act lawsuit pending in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Along with Sierra Club's own Environmental Law Program, long-time partner Earthjustice represents the Sierra Club in that litigation and numerous other legal matters related to the Monticello coal plant. The plant pollutes air quality in 17 national parks and wilderness areas across the central United States. Public health analyses have shown that pollution from Monticello, by itself, causes or contributes to more than 5,800 asthma attacks, 156 premature deaths, and more than 23,500 lost or restricted work days every year, resulting in more than \$1.5 billion in public health and lost productivity costs annually.

Monticello's closure also marks a milestone in clean air and water advocacy across the country. At a time when Donald Trump is reportedly trying to roll back the historic Clean Power Plan, Monticello marks the 11th coal plant retired in 2017 and the 10th coal plant retired since Trump was inaugurated. Clean energy like wind and solar is rapidly replacing uneconomical, dirty coal plants across the country as America transitions to a clean energy economy. In addition to executing their grassroots based, nationwide campaigns to quicken this transition, Sierra Club and its partners are proactively advocating for the development of programs and policies that help displaced fossil fuel workers find good, union wage jobs in the clean energy space.

In response, Misti O'Quinn, Organizing Representative with the Beyond Coal Campaign in Texas, issued the following statement:

“Today we learned that Luminant has made the decision to finally and forever stop burning coal at its Monticello plant near Mt. Pleasant, Texas. This plant has been emitting toxic and dangerous air and water pollution into Texas and the region for more than 40 years. Our communities in Dallas have borne the brunt of dangerous smog pollution for decades and coal plants like Monticello have been a huge source of that pollution. We’ve been organizing with countless other advocates for years to fight dirty coal that harms our communities. This is great news for families living near the coal plant in an area the EPA has identified as out of compliance with the clean air standard for sulfur pollution, as well as for those of us with kids and loved ones suffering from respiratory disease like asthma across the state.”

In response, Bruce Nilles, Director of Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal Campaign, issued the following statement:

“The retirement of one of America’s dirtiest coal plants demonstrates once again that dirty coal can’t compete against clean, renewable energy. When this plant retires Texans and communities all the way to the Eastern Seaboard will be breathing cleaner. As this unstoppable shift to clean energy moves forward, it’s essential that we shape this transition, making sure the communities that once relied on coal can benefit not only from cleaner air, but from new clean and sustainable family-supporting jobs.”

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About the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 2.4 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.