



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Community Calls on EPA to Enforce Clean Water Act at Valley**  
***Cites Valley Coal Plant's continued threats to Wisconsin's Water***

**Milwaukee, WI** -- Today, the Cleaner Valley Coalition (CVC) called on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to take stronger steps to clean up pollution at the Valley coal plant in Wisconsin. Two members of the Coalition – the Sierra Club with their attorneys at Midwest Environmental Advocates – filed a notice of intent to sue the EPA if it fails to comply with its duty regarding issuing a new water pollution permit for the Valley coal plant in Milwaukee, WI.

“The EPA’s job is to protect our community from big polluters like the Valley coal plant,” stated Dennis Grzezinski, attorney for Midwest Environmental Advocates and CVC member. “We need the EPA to stand up now and protect our water, aquatic life and the health of those in our community who rely on these waters.”

Built in 1968, the Valley plant is a coal-fired power plant located in the heart of Milwaukee, Wisconsin’s largest urban population center. Valley is currently operating under the conditions of a water pollution permit that expired more than 20 years ago. The expired permit fails to include standards necessary to protect fish and aquatic life and recreation in the South Menomonee Canal of the Menomonee River and downstream waters, including Lake Michigan.

As detailed in a report from the Sierra Club titled [Giant Fish Blenders: How Power Plants Kill Fish & Damage Our Waterways \(And What Can Be Done to Stop Them\)](#), it is estimated that billions of fish and other aquatic organisms are killed each year by water-intake systems on outdated power plants, including coal-fired power plants like Valley. Water-intake systems suck in water to cool the power plant, then spew hot water back out into local waterways.

The Valley coal plant sucks in up to 162 million gallons of water a day and, as a result, traps and kills fish, eggs, larvae and other aquatic wildlife. Conservative estimates show that a million fish are killed every year by the Valley coal plant, not counting eggs or larvae. Additionally, because the EPA has failed to deal with updating the permit for the plant, Valley currently is operating with the longest expired water permit in the country, which was last issued in 1987.

“For 20 years, this outdated permit has done nothing to protect the water of Milwaukee’s citizens,” said Emily Miota with the Sierra Club and CVC member. “Enough is enough. We need EPA to take immediate action to reduce fish kills and mercury and other toxins that endanger our health.”

Notably lacking from the outdated permit are necessary limits on Valley’s discharge of phosphorus, mercury, and copper. These harmful emissions pose a threat to public health, as mercury poses a particular threat to prenatal babies and young children. Exposure in the bloodstreams of pregnant and nursing women can result in birth defects like learning disabilities, lowered IQ, deafness, blindness and cerebral palsy.

“The Valley water permit should also incorporate new State thermal standards to minimize impacts of heated wastewater to water quality and fish and aquatic life, as well as comply with new federal requirements to install equipment such as wedge wire screens (or other technology) to minimize the unnecessary killing of fish, eggs, and larvae from Valley’s cooling water intake system,” said Cheryl Nenn of Milwaukee Riverkeeper and CVC member. “If the WDNR does not issue a permit in the next few months to address the expired and antiquated water permit, then EPA should take immediate action.”

The EPA has 60 days from receiving the notice to respond. If it does not, Sierra Club can move to file a suit in United States District Court.

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The Cleaner Valley Coalition ([www.cleanervalleycampaign.org](http://www.cleanervalleycampaign.org)) is a campaign that includes local service providers as well as health advocacy, civil rights, faith, environmental, and grassroots organizations united around the goal of cleaning up the Valley coal plant.

Midwest Environmental Advocates ([www.midwestadvocates.org](http://www.midwestadvocates.org)) is Wisconsin's first non-profit environmental law center. Midwest Environmental Advocates works for clean water, clean air, clean land and clean government by providing legal services to the under-represented and in the public's interest.

The Sierra Club ([www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)) is the nation's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. Founded in 1892 by John Muir, our 1.4 million members and supporters share a common mission to explore, enjoy and protect the planet.