



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Dairyland Power Cooperative Commits to Transition Away from Coal and Invests in Clean Energy**

**Alma, WI** – Today, the Sierra Club, Dairyland Power Cooperative, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a multi-million dollar settlement to improve the air quality and public health of Wisconsin residents and bring millions of dollars of solar investments to the state.

Based on terms agreed to between the parties, Dairyland Power Cooperative ceased burning coal at some of its coal-fired units in 2011 and, based on today's consent decree, that agreement is now included in a proposed court order. With Dairyland's commitment to either cease or reduce coal combustion at their Alma units, downwind residents will avoid breathing the dangerous pollution that comes from burning coal and the utility will reduce climate pollution.

"This is a tremendous victory for the health of Wisconsin residents," said Bruce Nilles, Senior Director of Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign. "The citizens of Alma and across the state will see marked improvements in air quality as a result of today's settlement."

Under the agreement, Dairyland will permanently cease to burn coal at three of its six coal-burning Alma units located on the Mississippi River, just north of La Crosse; reduce coal burning and emissions at two additional Alma units; and install pollution controls at the Madgett and Genoa units. This transition will help protect the health of residents on both sides of the Mississippi River as coal pollution has been linked to asthma attacks, heart disease and birth defects. This transition will also help protect the pocketbooks of Wisconsin and Minnesota residents because it will reduce the amount of money that is being sent out of state to buy increasingly expensive coal.

"Alma's three antiquated coal units are good examples of many coal units in Wisconsin – aging coal plants that are ready to retire. This move away from coal will allow workers to transition to the safer and more sustainable family-wage jobs that will be created by developing clean energy to phase out coal," explains Guy Wolf, consumer and advocate from the LaCrosse area. "Clean energy is already creating millions of jobs across Wisconsin. This settlement is taking great strides to ensure positive growth in the sector

As part of the settlement agreement, Dairyland will cooperate in paying \$950,000 in penalties for violations to the clean air act, and pay \$5 million divided between:

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- \$500,000 to restoring and protecting our national forests and parks,
- \$2 million for developing major new solar installations
- \$2.5 million to put solar panels on schools and provide energy efficiency assistance to low-income customers.

“Not only is Dairyland saving lives by eliminating dangerous coal pollution, but together we are creating opportunities for economic growth and clean energy jobs by investing in solar,” added Nilles. “We hope today’s settlement will help jumpstart a discussion about how Wisconsin can avoid falling behind its neighboring states like Minnesota and Iowa that are generating more than twice as much local clean energy as Wisconsin.”

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