

Adirondack Council Urges EPA to quickly finalize new “Transport Rule” to address acid rain

PHILADELPHIA, PA - The Adirondack Council today called on the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to finalize as quickly as possible its proposed “Transport Rule” to curb the acid rain and high-elevation smog that afflicts the largest park in the contiguous United States – Upstate New York’s 9,300-square-mile Adirondack Park.

The Adirondack Council has been a national leader in the fight against acid rain since the mid-1970s. The newly proposed Clean Air Transport Rule would sharply reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) from power plants, from the District of Columbia and all 31 states east of the Rocky Mountains. The cuts are due to occur between next spring, when the rule is expected to become final, and 2014, when the cuts would be complete.

“We in New York State have already acted to reduce our own emissions,” said Scott M. Lorey, Legislative Director of the Adirondack Council. “Unfortunately, New York alone cannot protect the Adirondack Park and its thousands of lakes, ponds and rivers from acid rain. We can’t stop the high-elevation smog that makes it unhealthy to climb our mountains on some summer days. These pollutants come from outside our state, are carried by prevailing winds and fall in the Adirondacks as acid deposition.”

EPA’s Transport Rule was necessitated by a federal court decision in 2008. The Court nullified a similar proposed rule known as the Clean Air Interstate Rule, sending it back to EPA to fix several flaws in that rule. EPA chose to start over.

“We believe that the Environmental Protection Agency is taking appropriate action to address shortcomings in CAIR that were outlined by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia in 2008,” continued Lorey. “We appreciate the efforts of the EPA to quickly respond to the Court’s ruling and move forward with the Transport Rule.”

The Transport Rule would be phased in over the next four years. In 2012, EPA would mandate the first reductions in SO₂, as well as year-round and seasonal NO_x cuts. In 2014, a second round of reductions for sulfur dioxide would be put in place for 15 states whose pollution is bad enough to prevent downwind states from achieving healthy air quality standards.