

**ADIRONDACK COUNCIL PRAISES OBAMA ADMINISTRATION FOR VOW TO FINALIZE
CLEAN AIR TRANSPORT RULE, URGES QUICK ACTION ON ACID RAIN**
*Threat of New Rule has Spurred Plans to Close Some of Nation's Dirtiest, Coal-Fired Power
Plants & Replace Them as Congress, Clean Air Act, had Intended*

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CHICAGO – The Adirondack Council, a national leader in the fight against acid rain, today praised the Obama Administration for promising to finalize new rules that will force the closure of a coal-fired power plant near here that was constructed in 1926 and is now one of the dirtiest sources of electric power in the nation.

This and other pollution reduction measures now underway will cause a steep drop in the acid rain and smog problems affecting New York's 9,300-square-mile Adirondack Park and other areas of the Northeast. The pollution controls are required under a new rule about to be finalized by the Obama Administration. The Adirondack Council urged the Obama Administration to institute the new rule by early summer, when smog season begins.

The State Line Power Station in Hammond, Ind., is just one of many aged, coal-fired power plants that will be scrapped or brought up to new-plant standards as the administration finalizes and enforces the pending Clean Air Transport Rule, the Council explained. Once approved, transport rule will replace the Clean Air Interstate Rule, which was sent back to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for revisions in 2008 by a U.S District Court decision.

The new transport rule will require deep cuts in sulfuric and nitrogen-based air pollution from all electric power plants in 31 states, ranging from Texas to the East Coast. More than half of those power plants' emissions cause acid rain and smog in New York, as those pollutants are carried northeast by prevailing winds. EPA also proposed tighter mercury and air toxics standards, but final approval for those will come later.

Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides from coal-burning Midwest power plants are the number one cause of acid rain and smog in the Northeast.

"The new Clean Air Transport Rule will be a welcome change here in the Adirondacks. By 2013, it will require upwind sulfur dioxide emissions to fall by 71 percent and nitrogen oxide pollution to fall by 52 percent below 2005 levels," said Brian L. Houseal, Executive Director of the Adirondack Council. "That will take another big bite out of acid rain, getting us to the point where most of the continuing damage will cease in the Adirondacks and Catskills. That is a huge step in the right direction.

"We would prefer to see Congress pass a law requiring cuts at least this deep, because laws are harder to challenge in court than rules or regulations created by a federal agency," Houseal said. "But given the current state of gridlock in Congress, the new rule is the best that the Obama Administration can manage right now. We understand that and are grateful for the effort. We urge the administration to approve the new rule by July 1."

Studies showed that the State Line plant alone cost the public more than \$77 million per year in health and environmental damages. The total costs since 2002 range from \$540 million to \$720 million. About 78,000 people live within a few miles of State Line's toxic fumes. More than 10 million live within 100

miles of the plant. It is only one of more than 400 coal-fired power plants upwind of the Adirondack Park that will be affected by the new rule.

For decades State Line evaded the air toxins restrictions required of newer coal plants under the federal Clean Air Act of 1970. Commonwealth Edison originally built the coal plant in 1926 and 1929. It added a 197-megawatt coal-fired generating unit in 1955. A 318-megawatt unit came online in 1962.

In 1977, Congress exempted older plants from Clean Air Act amendments that imposed tighter emissions limits and stricter standards for new coal plants. The idea was that older plants would soon be retired and thus pollution control retrofits could not be economically justified.

However, some 25 years after the ruling, Dominion Power took over the still-operating State Line station. Dominion said it would replace the coal plant with cleaner energy from wind turbines and natural gas boilers.

According to the EPA, sulfur and nitrogen-based ozone and fine particle pollution cause thousands of premature deaths and illnesses each year. These pollutants also reduce visibility and damage sensitive ecosystems.

EPA estimates that the new rule would yield between \$120 and \$290 billion in annual benefits, starting in 2014. This far outweighs the estimated annual costs of \$2.8 billion.

The emission reductions from this proposed rule would lead to significant annual health benefits. EPA says the rule would protect public health by avoiding:

- 14,000 to 36,000 premature deaths;
- 21,000 cases of acute bronchitis;
- 23,000 nonfatal heart attacks;
- 26,000 hospital and emergency room visits;
- 1.9 million days when people miss work or school;
- 240,000 cases of aggravated asthma; and,
- 440,000 upper and lower respiratory symptoms.

Air quality improvements would lead to increased visibility in national and state parks, and increased protection for sensitive ecosystems including, Adirondack and Appalachian lakes and streams, coastal waters and estuaries, and sugar maple and spruce/fir forests.

In the Adirondack Park, acid rain has wiped out native aquatic life in hundreds of lakes and ponds; it has killed high-elevation spruce/fir forests and devastated sugar maple forests at lower elevations. It harms birds and mammals that feed on insects by changing soil chemistry; and, it has poisoned potable water supplies by causing lead and copper to break free from pipes and fixtures. High-elevation smog is currently dense enough to harm hikers and climbers on Adirondack mountain peaks on hot summer days.

Founded in 1975, the Adirondack Council is dedicated to ensuring the ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park through research, education, advocacy and legal action. The Council has members in all 50 United States.

