

NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Wednesday, August 22, 2012

**ADIRONDACK COUNCIL CALLS ON OBAMA ADMINISTRATION TO APPEAL
FEDERAL COURT DECISION THAT STRUCK DOWN NEW ACID RAIN RULES**
*US Environmental Protection Agency Must Appeal Decision to Protect Nation's Most Vulnerable
Natural Areas, and Nation's Ill, From Continued Harm Caused by Upwind Smokestacks*

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Adirondack Council, an environmental organization that has been a national leader in the fight against acid rain, today called on the Obama Administration to appeal the decision of the U.S. District Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit here, which on Tuesday overturned the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule.

The Adirondack Council called Tuesday's court decision a major setback in the effort to protect the New York's 9,300-square-mile Adirondack Park from the ravages of acid rain. Power plant smokestack emissions from the Midwest have acidified the park's lakes and rivers, while contaminating fish, birds and other wildlife with mercury and other toxic metals.

"The Cross State Pollution Rule was our best hope for the Adirondack Park's eventual recovery from decades of damage from acid rain," said Adirondack Council Legislative Director Scott Lorey. "This is also a significant public health issue. These rules would have prevented tens of thousands of premature deaths every year from lung ailments and heart conditions. Without quick action, those illnesses will now be worsened by the air people breathe at their schools, homes and businesses every day."

The Adirondack Park – the largest American park in the lower 48 states – is the hardest-hit part of the nation when it comes to acid rain. More than 700 large lakes and ponds have been acidified by sulfur- and nitrogen-based air pollution, largely from coal-burning power plants that would have been forced to further curb their emissions by the Cross-State rule.

Recent cuts in air pollution had resulted in sharp drops in pollution carried by rain and snow falling on the park, as well as a drop in the number of lakes considered "critically acidified" (no longer livable for its native fish and wildlife). But the park is far from reaching chemical recovery, which is the point at which the rain and snow are no longer tainted to harmful levels.

It will take even longer to reach biological recovery, when the park's soils and waters are again capable of hosting all its native life forms. Some forms of life, including a handful of heritage-strain brook trout species native to critically acidified areas of the park, have been lost forever.

"Until the federal government takes action, the forests and waters of the Adirondack Park will continue to face daily abuse from the smokestacks of Midwest power plants," Lorey explained. "We need the Environmental Protection Agency to appeal this decision. Otherwise, we need Congress to consider new legislation that makes the same cuts in pollution as the Cross-State Rule. Congress seems far from agreement on pollution issues at the moment. We are looking to the administration for leadership on this crucial environmental and public health rule."

Acid rain affects every niche in the Adirondack Park's vast array of mountains, lakes, rivers, waterfalls, wetlands and streams. It drains calcium and other beneficial minerals from soils, robbing important nutrients from the food chain and damaging the growth of everything. It also converts non-toxic forms of mercury into toxic organic forms that cause brain and nerve damage and birth defects.

On July 6, 2011 the EPA finalized the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule. It would have required steep cuts in sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from power plants in 28 states, most of which cause acid rain in the Adirondack Park or smog throughout the Northeast. By 2014, the cuts would have decreased power plant emissions of sulfur by more than 70 percent and nitrogen by more than 50 percent. The rule was first proposed in 2010 after a federal court struck down its predecessor, the Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) in late 2008.

Federal public health officials estimated that the rule annually would have prevented more than 30,000 premature American deaths; reduce emergency room visits by nearly 20,000 and decrease missed work and school days by 1.8 million. The rule was scheduled to go into effect on Jan. 1, 2012, but the U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit, has stayed the rule, pending this review.

New York's Adirondack Park is a six-million-acre reserve of public and private lands, with 130 hamlets and villages spread over parts of 12 counties and 92 towns. The park contains more than 2.6 million acres of "forever wild" public Forest Preserve, protected from logging, lease, sale and development by the NYS Constitution. Nearly half is roadless wilderness. The park hosts most of the remaining old-growth forest in the Eastern U.S.

The park is also home to 135,000 year-round residents. The park's largest community is the Village of Saranac Lake, with a population of 5,400. Its most famous community is Lake Placid, home of the 1932 and 1980 Olympic Winter Games.

The Adirondack Council is a privately funded not-for-profit organization whose mission is to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park. The Council carries out its mission through research, education, advocacy and legal action. Adirondack Council members live in all 50 United States.