

CLEAN ENERGY NOW

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, November 27th

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'Clean Energy Now' Launches Campaign to Stop Michigan Coal Rush Coalition Powers Up Drive for Energy Independence, Jobs-Rich Future

LANSING – A new, statewide coalition called Clean Energy Now powered up the fight for Michigan's energy future today by launching an aggressive, statewide campaign to stop an onslaught of proposals that would build seven new, dirty, coal-fired power plants in Michigan.

The campaign, which is being coordinated by a number of the state's top citizen groups, includes a drive to reach over 150,000 homes in one day with a message urging people to tell state lawmakers to stop Michigan's coal rush and, instead, enact legislation that will make the Great Lakes State a jobs-rich, renewable energy powerhouse.

"Building more dirty, coal-fired power plants will keep Michigan locked in the energy dark ages, and saddle our state with outmoded technology and high costs just as we are fighting to move our state into the 21 st century," said Anne Woiwode, Director of the Sierra Club in Michigan, one of the coalition's groups. "Instead of investing in outdated coal-burning, Michigan should lead the way in producing clean, renewable energy that will make our state and our nation energy independent, fight global warming, and create the jobs of the future."

The campaign includes an online petition that calls for no new permits for more coal-fired power plants, in order to give Michigan's citizens a chance to decide their own energy future, not one that is determined by lobbyists for big utility companies.

The 'No Dirty Coal Plants' policy would remain in effect until Michigan has a Clean Energy Plan that would:

- Enact a strong renewable energy standard that requires energy providers to generate 20 percent of their electric power from renewable sources by 2020.
- Enact aggressive, statewide, utility-funded energy efficiency programs that reduce energy consumption in the state by at least 1 percent per year.
- Protect consumers from having to absorb the skyrocketing future costs of coal burning.
- Implement a long-term energy plan that guarantees energy efficiency and renewable power are used before any more outdated coal plants are built.

- Develops new standards for controlling the emission of CO2.

"Consumers must be protected from the skyrocketing costs of building more dirty and dangerous coal-fired power plants," said Brian Beauchamp, Campaign Manager with Michigan League of Conservation Voters, another member of the Clean Energy Coalition. "Michigan consumers should not be saddled with paying for expensive outdated technology. Instead we should invest in clean energy and the jobs of the future."

Since January, at least seven energy companies have sought to either build new or expand existing coal plants in Michigan. The proposals are pointed at Bay City, Alma, Rogers City, Filer Township, Marquette, and two in Midland.

Together, the plants would generate many millions of tons of additional global warming CO2 emissions and other pollutants per year.

"Michigan is at an energy crossroads and faces a critical choice," said David Holtz, Director of Michigan Clean Water Action, also a coalition member. "If we choose to allow big utility companies to build more dirty, coal-fired plants in Michigan, we keep our state dependent on imported energy and pump billions of dollars out-of-state. "But if we choose to invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency we can create tens of thousands of new, good-paying jobs and help break our state's dangerous dependence on imported fossil fuel."

The coalition pointed to warnings by scientists that, without a substantial reduction of global warming emissions generated by coal-fired power plants, climate change will continue to seriously harm the Great Lakes by further reducing their already historically low water levels and could spark more demands from thirsty states and nations seeking to take Great Lakes water. They add that global warming will also cause more droughts, harm Michigan tourism and agriculture, and cause a spike in the number of over-90-degree days in Detroit and other urban areas.

"It's time for Michigan's leaders to put old-fashioned, dirty, global-warming coal power aside and point the state to a new, clean, climate-cooling, jobs-rich future that protects the Great Lakes," said Kim Pargoff of Environment Michigan. "Investing in green power and efficiency will build Michigan's energy independence, stem our loss of billions of energy dollars, attract 21st-century companies, and restore our position as an innovative, prosperous industrial leader."

The groups' public education drive includes an online petition, promotional banners on heavily trafficked Web sites, and a "contact your legislator" drive to stop Michigan's coal rush. More information about the petition and letter campaign can be found at www.nocoalrush.com.

"Big Energy Companies must not be allowed to profiteer by saddling Michigan with dirty, dangerous, and outdated coal-burning plants when there is a better choice," said Dan Farough, Director of Progress Michigan, a coalition member. "Clean Energy Now is alerting legislators that Michigan's energy future hangs in the balance and urging them to put investing in the future ahead of the special interests in Lansing."

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