

Connecticut Delegation Urges EPA to Reduce Dangerous Air Pollution From Neighboring State's Coal Plant

In support of a recent petition from the State of Connecticut, the delegation called on the EPA to limit emissions from the Brunner Island coal plant and improve air quality in Connecticut

Tuesday, September 20, 2016

[WASHINGTON, D.C.] —Today, Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Congressman Jim Himes (D-4) along with Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT), Congressman John Larson (D-1), Congressman Joe Courtney (D-2), Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-3), and Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty (D-5) sent a letter urging the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce dangerous air pollution from the Brunner Island coal plant in Pennsylvania. The Brunner Island coal plant is the largest facility in the Northeast that lacks effective pollution controls for nitrogen oxides. The plant's emissions cross state borders, spreading throughout the Northeast and greatly contributing to smog pollution in the region. The lawmakers wrote in support of the State of Connecticut's recent petition to limit emissions from the Brunner Island coal plant and improve air quality in Connecticut.

“Brunner Island is a significant contributor to the inability of parts of Connecticut to achieve and maintain safe air quality that protects public health,” the lawmakers wrote. “Despite expending significant resources to reduce pollution and improve air quality, our state has been unable to meet those health-based standards, primarily due to pollution coming from beyond our borders. This pollution triggers asthma, heart attacks, and even premature death from heart and lung disease. We urge you and your capable team to take decisive action to respond to the petition within the statutory deadline and mitigate the damage being done to the health of our constituents and throughout the region by this large and uncontrolled facility.”

The full text of the letter is available below.

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

On behalf of our constituents, we write to you in support of the State of Connecticut's petition, pursuant to Section 126 of the Clean Air Act, to reduce dangerous pollution

from the Brunner Island coal plant that degrades air quality in our state. We urge you and your capable team to take decisive action to respond to the petition within the statutory deadline and mitigate the damage being done to the health of our constituents and throughout the region by this large and uncontrolled facility.

As outlined in the request from Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Commissioner Klee, the Brunner Island coal plant is the largest facility in the Northeast that lacks effective pollution controls for nitrogen oxides and greatly contributes to smog pollution in the region. This pollution triggers asthma, heart attacks, and even premature death from heart and lung disease. Certain populations are particularly vulnerable to these effects, including children, seniors, and those with existing respiratory diseases.

Brunner Island is a significant contributor to the inability of parts of Connecticut to achieve and maintain safe air quality that protects public health. Despite expending significant resources to reduce pollution and improve air quality, our state has been unable to meet those health-based standards, primarily due to pollution coming from beyond our borders. The Brunner Island coal plant is a textbook case for the foresight our Congressional predecessors had when crafting Section 126 of the Clean Air Act.

Also pending before the Agency is Pennsylvania's statewide nitrogen oxide pollution proposal; however, this proposal effectively exempts Brunner Island from any meaningful pollution reductions. This threatens the health of my constituents, and for the same reasons that EPA should grant the Connecticut petition, EPA should reject the "Brunner Island loophole" in the Pennsylvania nitrogen oxide plan.

We fully support prompt action from the Environmental Protection Agency to respond to the State of Connecticut's petition and to effectuate appropriate pollution reductions from the Brunner Island coal plant to ensure that our state and the entire region can breathe more easily.

Sincerely,

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