

SIERRA CLUB STATEMENT ON TEP PLANS NOT TO PURCHASE OUT-OF-STATE SAN JUAN COAL MINE

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Contact:

Shane Levy - shane.levy@sierraclub.org, 201-679-9507

TUCSON - Following concerns raised by Arizona faith, clean energy and community leaders, Tucson Electric Power (TEP) said that it would not purchase the San Juan coal mine located in New Mexico.

On Wednesday, a coalition of Arizona clean energy and community leaders gathered outside TEP headquarters to urge the utility to invest in clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency rather than sink ratepayer money into purchasing the out-of-state San Juan coal mine. In addition to a letter that was submitted to TEP President David Hutchens, more than 650 Southern Arizonans sent letters to Hutchens opposing the mine's purchase.

In response, Dan Millis, Organizer with the Sierra Club's Grand Canyon Chapter, released the following statement:

"Our state and communities stand at a crossroads: continue to threaten public health by mining and burning dirty coal or truly commit to investing in clean energy like wind and solar. We applaud TEP for looking past purchasing the San Juan coal mine, which would prolong the life of one of the region's biggest threats to clean air and clean water and tie up important resources that could be invested in the local clean energy economy in Arizona.

Arizona families want and deserve clean, renewable energy like solar and we hope that with today's announcement, TEP will continue charting a path that moves beyond dirty coal and truly embraces Arizona enormous clean energy potential. Let's seize this opportunity to divest from the dirty, expensive San Juan Generating Station in New Mexico and commit to a clean energy transition that creates jobs here in Arizona."

BACKGROUND:

The San Juan Generating Station is what is known as a "mine mouth plant," which means it procures all of its fuel from the adjacent San Juan Coal Mine. Earlier this year, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved a plan to retire units 2 and 3 of the San Juan Generating Station as part a regional haze settlement agreement. Under the plan, units 1 and 4 of the plant will continue burning coal. TEP owns 20 percent of San Juan Generating Station