

NEW EPA RECOMMENDATIONS FAIL TO ADDRESS UNSAFE LOUISIANA COAL PLANT POLLUTION--THE SIERRA CLUB EXPRESSES DISAPPOINTMENT, URGES LOUISIANA TO CURTAIL DANGEROUS POLLUTION

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AUSTIN, Tex. -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today failed to protect Louisiana communities from unsafe levels of sulfur dioxide pollution caused largely by coal-burning power plants. Although EPA had initially identified Cleco Power's and American Electric Power's (AEP) jointly-owned Dolet Hills power plant as emitting dangerously high levels of sulfur dioxide pollution in the area surrounding the plant, the agency flip-flopped in response to industry pressure and declined to designate the area as out of compliance with the public health standard for sulfur dioxide. Pollution controls, which have been available for decades, could reduce the Dolet Hills plant's SO₂ emissions by as much as 98 percent, yet Cleco Power and AEP refuse to install modern controls and continue to burn high-sulfur lignite.

Exposure to elevated levels of sulfur dioxide pollution for just a short time can make it hard to breathe and prolonged exposure to persistent levels of sulfur dioxide can make it easier to get sick and harder to smell over time. Children, the elderly and people with asthma are most affected by high levels of sulfur dioxide pollution. Chronic exposure is associated with deadly lung and heart conditions. And sulfur dioxide pollution contributes to fine particulate matter which travels downwind, endangering families across Louisiana.

In response to the recommendations Woody Martin, chairperson for the Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club, issued the following statement:

"The Sierra Club is extremely disappointed that the EPA ignored substantial evidence demonstrating that Dolet Hills is causing air quality conditions that are unsafe because of high levels of sulfur dioxide pollution. EPA's reversal is astonishing and will put the health of thousands of people at risk. It is a missed opportunity to hold Cleco Power and American Electric Power accountable for the massive amount of pollution they spew into the communities surrounding and downwind of Dolet Hills, and we will do everything we can to strengthen protections against this dangerous pollutant."

Campaign Name:

[Beyond Coal](#)