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**CONTACT:**

Jenna Garland, Sierra Club, (404) 281-6398

Louise Gorenflo, (931) 484-2633

## **In Push for Transparency, Sierra Club Files Freedom of Information Act Suit Against TVA**

*Group Launches Online Ad Campaign to Push for Affordable Solutions*

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KNOXVILLE, TN – In an effort to push the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to operate with transparency and concern for ratepayers before it stops taking public comments on its proposal to spend over a billion dollars to overhaul its aging Gallatin coal plant, the Sierra Club has filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit against TVA. TVA has announced that it will not take any public comments on the project after November 30, but has failed to provide the public with critical environmental and safety information on its plans. Those plans involve constructing 150-foot tall ash landfills in wetlands next to Old Hickory Lake. Sierra Club's lawsuit, which the Club filed as a last resort, seeks to bring those plans into the open before it is too late. In addition to public outreach efforts, Sierra Club has purchased significant [online ad coverage](#) on three local newspaper websites, calling on TVA to prioritize twenty-first century clean energy solutions, and not waste billions on an aging coal plant.

"TVA wants to spend more than one billion dollars to keep an aging, obsolete coal plant running," says Louise Gorenflo, lead volunteer with Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign in Tennessee. "To add insult to injury, TVA officials are trying to limit public comment so they can plow forward with their expensive and dangerous plan. We're taking these steps now to ensure that TVA can't make billion-dollar decisions without public input. TVA continues to act like an incandescent utility in a fluorescent world."

TVA has fought public oversight of its plans. TVA officials initially offered only thirty days for members of the public and ratepayers to comment on their plan. A public outcry from citizens' organizations across the state resulted in a 14-day extension of the comment period, but TVA is still refusing to provide the information the public needs to be fully informed, and has announced that it does not see any reason to hold a public hearing to allow concerned residents to speak out.

"Now that TVA has announced that Bill Johnson, former CEO of Progress Energy, will take the helm in Tennessee, we hope to see a real change of attitude," said Vanessa Pierce, Director of Sierra Club's

Beyond Coal Campaign in the Eastern Region. “TVA has an obligation to its ratepayers and the people who live in the Tennessee Valley. Rate hike after rate hike – with no real investment in the clean energy future – is no longer acceptable. TVA has the opportunity to phase out an obsolete and polluting coal plant in favor of energy efficiency. The right choice is clear.”

In August, Sierra Club partnered with Synapse Energy Economics, a leading analysis firm, [to release a report](#) demonstrating that TVA’s older coal plants, especially the Gallatin plant, are no longer economic to operate. Spending more than one billion dollars to modernize the plant to meet Clean Air Act standards will increase costs for decades. According to the report, a modest energy efficiency savings program could reduce energy consumption enough to phase out the Gallatin coal plant, saving money for TVA ratepayers over the long term. TVA’s own analysis shows that a yearly energy savings goal of 1.2% is both achievable and sufficient to phase out the use of the Gallatin plant.

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