U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
Blog Round-up
Prepared by the Office of Public Affairs

Friday, February 15, 2013

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(BNA articles can be viewed online **http://Intranet.epa.gov/desktop/news.htm**

BLOG ROUND-UP
Friday, July 09, 2010

AIR

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July 9, 2010

Director, Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign (*Huffington Post*)

Posted: July 8, 2010 02:32 PM
EPA Takes Action to Protect People from Dangerous Coal Pollution
Epa , Sierra Club , Smog , News

How's this for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) fulfilling its role to protect environmental and public health: On Tuesday, EPA proposed a rule that would prevent between 14,000 and 36,000 premature deaths annually.

The Transport Rule would set stronger emissions standards for the dangerous air pollution emitted from coal-fired power plants in the eastern United States. This new rule would replace the Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR), which had been struck down by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in 2008.

While a thorough review and comment period remains to be completed, this is a positive step forward for people who want clean air.

The harmful pollution coal-fired power plants emit into the air does not just endanger people in the immediate vicinity of the plant. Pollution from coal plants is carried downwind, endangering people throughout the entire eastern United States.

This rule addresses the reality that dangerous pollution doesn't recognize state borders. Just as the oil gusher has now hit every Gulf state, the pollution from coal-fired power plants drifts downwind into people's lungs throughout a region - hence why another way of talking about this rule is as a 'Good Neighbor' rule.

Coupled with other EPA rules, the Transport Rule will achieve a 71% reduction in sulfur dioxide and a 52% reduction in nitrogen oxide from 2005 levels in the states the rule applies to.

These pollutants covered by this rule are precursors to ozone, which is incredibly dangerous to human health. Pollutants like ozone and particulate matter (better known as smog and soot) from coal-fired pollution have been found to cause respiratory illness (including asthma and bronchitis), as well as aggravation of existing cardiovascular disease. It is absolutely essential that EPA do everything in its power to limit the damage these pollutants do to millions of people throughout the United States.

The statistics published with the rule make a very compelling case. According to EPA, the Transport Rule would yield up to $290 billion in annual health benefits, 'including avoiding an estimated 14,000 to 36,000 premature deaths, 23,000 nonfatal heart attacks, 21,000 cases of acute bronchitis, 240,000 cases of aggravated asthma, and 1.9 million days when people miss school or work due to ozone- and particle pollution-related symptoms.'

This is a great step from EPA to clean up the air. We will stay engaged throughout this process to ensure people's health and welfare are protected.

MOUNTAINTOP MINING

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BREAKING:

RAN Invades EPA To Protest Mountaintop Removal (*Treehugger*)

by Daniel Kessler on 07. 8.10
Business & Politics
Activists with the Rainforest Action Network are at EPA headquarters blaring John Denver's "Take me Home, Country Roads" and locking themselves to each other to protest the devastating practice of mountaintop removal (MTR) coal mining. The EPA has given the green light for a major new mountaintop removal coal mining permit in Logan County, West Virginia, that will destroy three miles of currently clean streams and 760 acres of forest.

This morning, five people entered EPA headquarters in Washington D.C. and sat down in the center of the lobby and locked themselves together. One climber is now standing atop the EPA's front door with two banners reading: "Blowing up mountains for coal contaminates Appalachia's water, Stop MTR" and "EPA - Easier to Poison Appalachia's Water than Defy King Coal."

RAN's Scott Parkin's explained why:

"We're sitting down inside the EPA to demand the EPA stand up to protect Appalachia's precious drinking water, historic mountains and public health from the devastation of mountaintop removal. At issue here is not whether mountaintop removal mining is bad for the environment or human health, because we know it is and the EPA has said it is. At issue is whether President Obama's EPA will do something about it. So far, it seems it is easier to poison Appalachia's drinking water than to defy King Coal."

Yesterday, the EPA green-lighted the Pine Creek Surface Mine. It's the first MTR project approved since the agency released new guidelines on April 1, saying that no project would get approval if it would lead to "significant and irreversible damage to Appalachian watersheds at risk from mining activity."

PESTICIDES

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July 9, 2010

Monsanto Fined By EPA For Illegally Selling Genetically Engineered Cotton Seeds (Huffington Post)

First Posted: 07- 8-10 03:09 PM | Updated: 07- 8-10 03:40 PM
Epa, Monsanto, Monsanto Cotton, Monsanto Epa, Monsanto Genetically Modified Seeds, Green News

Agriculture giant Monsanto was slapped with a record-breaking fine of $2.5 Million for mislabeling and illegally distributing cotton seeds containing genetically engineered pesticides.

The EPA limits the planting and selling of this GM cotton seed to protect the environment from the 'potential harm associated with the uncontrolled spread of the genetically engineered component of these pesticides, Bacillus thuringiensis [BT].'

The EPA cites 1,782 violations which occurred in 22 states.

The EPA made the following statement in a press release:

"This agreement shows that when a company violates the law by distributing misbranded pesticides, EPA will take action," said Cynthia Giles, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance. "The regulated community should understand that we take these violations seriously, and the public will accept nothing less than compliance."

The health and environmental effects of BT cotton has not been extensively documented. Farmers in China have blamed the pesticide for a surge of pests, and scientists are calling for further study of the chemical's effects.