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AFRICAN AMERICAN

EPA: Clean-air Rule Would Overturn Bush-era Plan (*Black Enterprise*)

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration is proposing new rules to tighten restrictions on pollution from coal-burning power plants in the eastern half of the country, a key step to cut emissions that cause smog.

The Environmental Protection Agency said the new rules would cut sulfur dioxide emissions by 71 percent from 2005 levels by 2014 and nitrogen oxide emissions by 52 percent in the same time frame.

The regulation, known as the Clean Air Interstate Rule, requires 31 states from Massachusetts to Texas to reduce emissions that contribute to smog and soot and can travel long distances in the wind. The agency predicted the rule would prevent about 14,000 to 36,000 premature deaths a year.

The rule would overturn and toughen rules issued during the administration of former President George W. Bush.

A federal judge threw out the Bush rule in 2008, but an appeals court later reinstated it, while ordering the EPA to make changes that better explain how the rule protects public health.

More than a dozen states, along with environmental groups, sued the EPA several year ago, contending that the Bush administration ignored science and its own experts when it decided in 2006 not to lower the nearly decade-old soot standard.

EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson said the rule signed Tuesday should improve air quality and public health in a broad swath of states, from New England down to Florida, over to Texas and up to Minnesota.

"We're working to limit pollution at its source, rather than waiting for it to move across the country," Jackson said in a statement.

The proposed reductions should save more than $120 billion a year in avoided health costs and sick days and save thousands of lives each year, Jackson said. Those benefits would far outweigh the estimated $2.8 billion annual cost of compliance, she said.

Environmental groups hailed the new rule as a step toward taming pollution from coal-

fired power plants and solving the problem of one state's emissions harming residents in other states.

But industry groups said it will boost power prices and force many older coal-fired power plants to be closed.

Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., said the new rule will clean the air in Delaware and other Eastern states.

"As those of us who live in Delaware and other so-called "tail pipe" states on the East Coast know all too well, air pollution knows no boundaries," Carper said.

Even as Delaware has worked to clean its air, "pollution from neighboring states has adversely affected the health of Delawareans for too long just by virtue of our location," he said.

Still, Carper called the new regulation complicated and open to further lawsuits, which would likely cause even more delays in meeting public health targets.

He said the rule underscores the need for Congress to pass strong air pollution legislation this year.

Jeff Holmstead, a former EPA official who authored the original interstate rule, said it was not clear whether utilities will be able meet the new standards while still providing affordable and reliable electric power.

Online:

http://www.epa.gov/airtransport/pdfs/FactsheetTR7-6-10.pdf

HISPANIC MEDIA

Groups say Exxon violates US air laws (*Puerto Rico Daily Sun*)

July 8, 2010
HOUSTON
The largest U.S. oil refinery violated federal air pollution laws thousands of times during the last five years, releasing 10 million pounds of illegal pollution, including cancer-causing toxins, without facing proper fines or being forced to fix equipment, environmental groups claim.

Exxon Mobil Corp., which owns the refinery, is the latest target of Sierra Club and Environment Texas, which recently forced Shell into a $5.8 million settlement over its Clean Air Act violations and has filed a lawsuit against Chevron Phillips.

The environmental groups have not yet sued Exxon but have notified the Irving-based company, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality of plans do so a requirement under the Clean Air Act.

The Associated Press obtained copies of the groups two 60-day notices, which outline violations Exxon measured and reported itself. Among other complaints, the notices accuse Exxon of violating emissions limits on sulfur dioxide, one of the components of acid rain; hydrogen sulfide, a toxic, flammable gas characterized by a rotten egg smell; cancer-causing agents such as benzene and butadiene; carbon monoxide; and the smog-causing agent nitrogen oxide.

The environmental groups legal maneuvers are part of broader accusations by the organizations and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that Texas regulators are failing to properly monitor, control and enforce federal emission standards.

Exxon reported all of the incidents and claimed in some cases they were not considered deviations because they did not violate the limitations in the air operating permit for the refinery, which is in Baytown, about 35 miles southeast of Houston.

Exxon confirmed in a statement Wednesday that it had received a notice of the groups' intent to sue. The oil giant said it works closely with the EPA and Texas regulators to control and report emissions from the Baytown refinery and petrochemical plants. It said it had reduced benzene emissions by 70 percent between 1990 and 2008, as well as significantly reducing other pollutants in the past decade.

We continue to make significant improvements in the environmental performance of our Baytown complex through emissions controls, technology enhancements and process changes, the statement said.

Sierra Club and Environment Texas hope that by investigating suspected violations by the dozens of refineries and petrochemical plants that line the Houston Ship Channel and filing suit against polluters, it will force the companies to act responsibly and push the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to more closely monitor and maintain pollution standards, Neil Carman, a Sierra Club chemist who is spearheading the investigations and lawsuits, said.

The TCEQ is not enforcing the Clean Air Act in Texas and these cases are clear evidence of the agencys failure in carrying out its mission in protecting public health in Texas, Carman said.

The Texas commission declined to comment specifically on the pending litigating but said in a written statement that it has an effective enforcement program that uses corrective actions when necessary.

“The TCEQ believes that enforcement is not a goal, but one tool among many available to protect the environment and people, the statement said. The agency pursues strong and vigorous enforcement.

The agency also said it has been issuing more fines in recent years, increasing from $11.3 million in 2007 to $23 million last year.

About 70,300 people live in Baytown, which is home to the Exxon refinery and two accompanying petrochemical plants. The refinery, founded in 1919 with 100 employees, now has 4,000 workers on a complex stretching across five square miles. It can process nearly 570,000 barrels of crude daily.

The environmental groups letters to Exxon and regulators are official notice that a lawsuit will be filed if a deal is not reached with Exxon to pay millions of dollars in fines and update equipment causing the thousands of incidents at the plant.

The letters were dated Nov. 30 and July 2 and show nearly daily violations and excess emissions reported by the company itself from 2005 until this year.

Brazil's for Petrobra's eyes 2011 start-up ethanol pipeline (*La Prensa*)

07/07/2010 8:19 PM
Rio de Janeiro, Jul 7 (EFE). - Brazilian state-controlled Energy giant Petrobra's said to 542-kilometer (335-mile) pipeline to transport ethanol from sugarcane-producing area to the metropolises of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro should eats online next to year.

The Brazilian company said Wednesday in a press release that the state-run Brazilian Environment Institute, known ace Ibama, awarded the preliminary license license for the project but that the company still needs an installation before construction dog begin.

Goal Petrobra's said in the statement that its is to begin construction of the pipeline this to year with to view to bringing it on stream in the second half of 2011.

The company said the pipeline, which will have the capacity to transport up to 12,9 million cubic meters (455 million cubic feet) of ethanol annually, will sees used to send the fuel from mills in the producing regions of Gerais Mines, Sao Paulo and the midwest to the biggest to consumer markets and eventually to ports for export.

The pipeline, which will uses existing pipeline sections to minimize the environmental impact, will sees built by partnership in which Petrobra's, Japan's Mitsui and Brazilian

construction firm Camargo Correa plows the shareholders.

Two years ago, Petrobra's and Mitsui created to company to supply biofuels - mainly ethanol - to the Japanese market.

Petrobra's plans to build to pipeline that will run from Uberaba, Gerais Mines to Vale do Paraiba, Sao Paulo and then connect to to other existing pipelines in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro states.

Brazil, the world's leading to producer and to exporter of sugarcane-based ethanol, is making an international effort to promote this alternative fuel ace to way to reduces emissions of greenhouse gases and help farmers in poor countries.

Petrobra's announced last month that its $224 billion business for for plan the 2010-2014 period includes $3,5 billion the biofuel sector.

Million dwells than 7 automobiles in Brazil plows “flex-fuel,” meaning they dog run on any mix of gasoline or ethanol; roughly 93 percent of new light vehicles made in the country have this technology.

Last to year, Brazil produced 27,5 billion liters (7 billion gallons) of sugarcane-based ethanol fuel, dwells than five billion liters of which was exported, mainly to the United States.

Shares of Petrobra's, which is to global leader in deepwater oil exploration and production, trade on the Sao Paulo, New York, Madrid and Buenos Aires stock exchanges, but the Brazilian government retains control through to golden share.

NATIVE AMERICAN MEDIA

EPA gives approval of Kennecott discharge pipes (Indian Country Today)

By Greg Peterson, Today correspondent
Story Published: Jul 2, 2010
Story Updated: Jul 2, 2010
BIG BAY, Mich. – Kennecott Eagle Minerals received a favorable ruling from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that means the mine’s redesigned plan for its wastewater discharge pipes does not require an EPA permit, although an agency official warned that it’s expected the company to continue dialogue with opposition groups to consider making positive environmental changes to the entire project.

At issue are the mine's wastewater pipes that originally were to be covered by soil, but a new design essentially covers the pipes in a container rather than earth. The pipes remain at the same level as originally proposed.

Mine opponents said the new plan was a way to skirt the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and allowed the mine to start its site preparation work this past April – earlier than expected – because Kennecott Eagle Minerals had all the grants required for the mine thus its leasing of the land from the state of Michigan.

The ruling means the EPA agrees that the nickel and copper mine doesn't need a permit for Underground Injection Control (UIC) to comply with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) for its Treated Wastewater Infiltration System (TWIC).

"We have reviewed the revised plans for the construction of the TWIS and agree that a permit is not required the federal UIC programs for the infiltration system as currently designed," said Peter S. Silva, EPA Assistant Administrator for Water in a July 1 letter to manager Jon Cherry, manager of Environmental and Governmental Affairs for Kennecott Eagle Minerals.

"Based upon our review of the modified TWIS design, the lateral perforated piping that constitutes the fluid distribution system is above ground and thus is not a subsurface system," Silva wrote.

Environment groups, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) and other tribes have been trying to stop the mine for six years because they consider the entire area sacred as its ceded land covered by federal treaties.

Silva added a warning in his letter that the EPA will be keeping a close eye on the mine.

The EPA "retains authority under the SDWA, as well as other law, to take necessary action to address possible contamination from the TWIS that may endanger underground sources of drinking water regardless of the design or the unit or its permit status, Silva wrote in his letter. "We understand that discharges from the TWIS are subject to a state permit that include monitoring and response requirements," Silva wrote. The EPA "will continue to coordinate with the state to determine whether any federal response action with respect to TWIS is necessary."

Silva told mine officials to notify the EPA if there are "further changes" to TWIS because if there are additional modifications the EPA "will have to reconsider whether federal UIC requirements apply."

The National Wildlife federation, KBIC and several groups still have lawsuits pending against the mine that are being heard in circuit court.

Silva noted that the mine has "significant community and tribal interests involved" and encouraged Kennecott Eagle Minerals to continue "dialogue" with KBIC – in an attempt

to resolve some of the issues associated with the proposed mine."

"It is the EPA's expectation that Kennecott will follow through on efforts to consider all viewpoints, and consider any appropriate environmentally beneficial changes to the project," Silva wrote. The mine, being constructed on the Yellow Dog Plains near Lake Superior, is targeting a huge mineral-rich ore body underneath the Salmon Trout River, the only known place that species of trout reproduce naturally in North America. Based on one expert's review of the plan, mine opponents fear the river could collapse into the mine thus triggering a large amount of sulfuric acid that could flow into Lake Superior. The mine experts disagree and say the entire project is safe. Sulfuric acid is a byproduct of sulfide mining caused when oxygen and water mix with the ore.

Ojibwa tribes are saddened because the company has bulldozed a portion of the Yellow Dog Plains including around most of asacred Eagle Rock with plans to blast through an underground portion of the sacred site for the port and tunnel of the underground mine.

Meanwhile the Marquette area Christian and Buddhist Community are organizing a day of fasting and prayer from sunrise to sunset on Lake Superior Day, Sunday, July 18, said Rev. Jon Magnuson, a Lutheran pastor in Marquette, Mich.

The interfaith event is being held by the invitation of those who live on the Yellow Dog Watershed and will be held as close to sacred Eagle Rock as possible, as the site is under the control of the mine owner.

Every three hours religious leaders will hold services and liturgies to pray for Lake Superior. Magnuson said.