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EPA'S STRONG HAZE CLEAN-UP PLAN IS A BIG WIN FOR THE NATURAL STATE

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Sierra Club Lawsuit Leads To Cleaner Air in Arkansas

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Little Rock - Today the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized [clean air safeguards](#) that will require the largest power plants in Arkansas to reduce emissions of air pollution. The Regional Haze Plan will protect the Caney Creek and Upper Buffalo Wilderness Areas from pollution caused by Arkansas coal-burning power plants. The rule will also clear the skies in the Mark Twain National Forest and Mingo National Wildlife Refuge in Missouri from the air pollution that travels north over the state line from Arkansas coal plants.

EPA's Regional Haze Plan for Arkansas requires emissions reductions from some of the nation's largest smokestacks, those at the White Bluff and Independence coal-burning plants. In 2015, Entergy, the operator of these plants, announced a proposal to reduce emissions from the White Bluff plant by ceasing to burn coal at the plant in the 2020's, as a substitute for installing pollution controls. Sierra Club looks forward to working with Entergy and EPA to lock-in the phase out of coal at White Bluff, and we encourage Entergy to also develop a plan to phase out coal at the Independence plant, and transition those workers to clean energy jobs. Ending the use of coal at these two giant coal plants avoids the cost of having to modernize the plants and build scrubbers to capture emissions, while also securing important pollution reductions. We can protect ratepayers, clean the air, and build out renewable energy jobs in Arkansas by ending the use of coal at these two plants and phasing them out responsibly over time.

Today's Haze Pollution Plan is a direct result of a 2014 Sierra Club lawsuit against EPA. The Clean Air Act requires states to come up with a regional haze reduction plan, and the state of Arkansas failed to complete and submit a sufficient state plan. By law, the EPA then had to write a federal plan for Arkansas-- but when EPA failed to act, Sierra Club sued EPA, which ultimately resulted in the plan that was released today. Sierra Club will continue its review of the haze rule in coming days to make sure EPA followed the law to get best available reductions in all air emissions affecting our skies.

In response to the decision, Glen Hooks, Director of the Arkansas Sierra Club, issued the following statement:

"The EPA's strong haze reduction plan is fantastic for Arkansas. The plan not only increases visibility for Arkansans who enjoy our parks, but specifically does it by cleaning up our state's dirtiest coal-fired power plants. Entergy now has a big decision to make--charge billions of dollars to Arkansas ratepayers to prop up its aging power plants, or transition these dirty plants toward retirement. The Sierra Club urges Entergy to immediately begin planning for retiring White Bluff and Independence while working toward continuing to build clean, renewable energy jobs in Arkansas."

John Hickey, Director of the Missouri Sierra Club, released the following statement:

"As someone who has canoed the Mingo National Wildlife Refuge with my family, I know how special federal lands can be. The forests and waters of southern Missouri are remarkable places and coal plants in Arkansas should not be sending their pollution north over the state line. I am glad EPA is stepping in to control interstate pollution blowing into Missouri. This allows future generations to enjoy the wilderness and the nature that surrounds these lands."

Matthew Gerhart, an attorney with Earthjustice, which represented the Sierra Club, released the following statement:

"The haze standards for Arkansas will significantly improve air quality in places where people work, live, and recreate. People throughout Arkansas and Missouri will breathe easier as a result of these vital protections, which are long overdue."

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