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## **Sierra Club Takes Action to Force Holland Board of Public Works to Use Modern Controls for Soot and Smog**

Grand Rapids, MI – Sierra Club took action today to force the Holland Board of Public Works' James De Young coal-fired power plant to employ modern controls for soot- and smog-forming pollution that is a leading contributor to asthma and other serious health problems. Over the past decade, the more than 40-year old plant has been repeatedly modified to keep it operating past its retirement date without installing required modern pollution controls.

“Old, dirty coal plants in Michigan like the De Young plant are huge sources of pollutants that contribute to asthma, lung cancer, and other respiratory issues,” said Anne Woiwode, Director of the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter. “Nationwide, pollution from coal-fired power plants causes over 21,000 hospitalizations, 38,000 heart attacks and 24,000 deaths each year,” added Woiwode.

The Holland Board of Public Works undertook major modifications and life-extension projects at the plant over time without notifying state regulators, without obtaining a new permit, and without installing modern pollution controls. These changes not only extended the life of the aging coal plant, but also likely increased harmful emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and fine particulate matter. The violations were uncovered during Sierra Club's investigation into the Board's plans to expand the facility and more than double its capacity.

Despite claims by the Board that expanding the De Young plant will improve air emissions, the expansion will do nothing to address the years of excess pollution resulting from the plant's failure to use adequate pollution controls like those used elsewhere in the country. In addition, the Board's assertion that the expansion project will actually lower emissions fails to acknowledge that historic emissions were unlawful and attempts to take credit for reductions already required by law.

“Especially in today's economic climate the Holland Board of Public Works should clean up its existing plant before it sinks hundreds of millions of dollars into another polluting project,” said James Gignac, Midwest Director of the Sierra Club's National Coal Campaign. “The Board's desire to more than double the size of a project that has been polluting illegally for years shows a great disregard for public health and environmental quality,” added Gignac.

In addition to public health, the De Young plant and its proposed expansion should be part of the past when it comes to energy. “We have the opportunity right now to create a clean energy future for Holland, by getting any additional energy needs from clean sources, promoting energy

efficiency, creating clean energy jobs, and reducing global warming pollution,” said Jan O’Connell with the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter. “Now is the time to repower, refuel, and rebuild America right here in West Michigan,” urged O’Connell.

The Sierra Club suit filed in Federal District Court today charges the City of Holland and the Holland Board of Public Works with violations of the federal Clean Air Act. Sierra Club is seeking enforcement of the Clean Air Act, installation of modern pollution controls, and penalties to hold the De Young plant responsible for its pollution.

Sierra Club is represented in this matter by Madison, WI based attorneys Lester Pines and Kira Loehr of Cullen Weston Pines & Bach LLP and David Bender of Garvey McNeil & McGillivray, S.C.

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