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## **Groups Sharply Criticize Granholm-Cherry Administration Approval of Coal Plant**

### **Today's DEQ's decision strikes blow to clean energy jobs**

LANSING – Clean energy and environmental groups today criticized a decision today by Governor Granholm's Department of Environmental Quality approving a controversial permit for a coal plant project in Bay City, a move that strikes a blow to clean energy investments and jobs in Michigan. The DEQ is expected to put off a decision on a pending permit application for a smaller coal plant in Rogers City.

We are disappointed by the failure of Governor Granholm to keep her promise to move Michigan toward a clean energy economy. Thousands committed to Michigan's future are rallying to fight this badly flawed decision at every step to get Michigan back on track toward a clean energy economy," Sierra Club Michigan Chapter Director Anne Woiwode said.. "Governor Granholm's DEQ had an important decision to make today and it failed the test of leadership. Building a coal plant Michigan doesn't need near Bay City will saddle ratepayers with terrible costs and waste investors' money. By approving the Bay City plant, the Granholm Administration will set back Michigan's efforts to build a clean energy economy that can create good-paying jobs."

The DEQ's decision comes despite the Michigan Public Service Commission staff conclusion that Consumers Energy does not need a new baseload power plant until at least 2022, and that any electricity needs could be met through available cleaner sources, including efficiency and renewables. The MPSC staff also concluded that the proposed coal plant in Rogers City, requested by Wolverine Power, was not needed at all. The recommendations stemmed from the failure of the utilities to show that Michigan needs more energy in coming years. The utilities also failed to counter growing evidence that renewable energy – and not dirty coal – could meet future needs.

The Clean Air Act permit for a new Consumers' Bay City coal plant is expected to include language involving the decommissioning of older coal plants by Consumers, but environmental groups say the permit decision does nothing to push Consumers toward clean energy alternatives.

Michigan is heading in the wrong direction with this unfortunate decision," Clean Water Action Michigan Director Cyndi Roper said. "The federal government has declared coal pollutants a threat to human health. Every other state is investing in clean energy, creating jobs and turning away from coal. Michigan, on the other hand, is looking to the past and this decision threatens to keep us in the energy Dark Ages."

The citizens of Michigan and the Bay City area will pay a steep price for this ill-advised decision," Roper said. "The citizens of Michigan have said they don't want any more coal plants and they will not accept half-measures. We will continue our fight. Michigan wants more jobs, not more coal plants that will empty our pockets and put our economic future at risk."

Thousands of citizens had voiced opposition to the development of new dirty coal plants in Michigan, including the ones in Rogers City and Bay City. Citizens groups have repeatedly called on the government to reject permits to build new plants and invest instead in clean energy.

According to a report by the Natural Resources Defense Council, Michigan can meet its energy needs through a combination of wind power, solar and other renewable energy sources coupled with aggressive energy efficiency programs. Among the NRDC's findings:

- Energy efficiency program alone could save Michigan \$3 billion in electricity costs over the next 20 years.

- Michigan's previous energy plan, written in 2007, is out of date, with unrealistic projections of future electrical demand, limited implementation of energy efficiency and renewable energy, and reliance on outdated 20th century coal technologies.
- Clean renewable energy is less expensive, cleaner, faster, more economically robust, and creates more jobs in Michigan than a 20<sup>th</sup> century plan based on new but obsolete large power plants driven by fossil fuels.