

VICTORY!! NMU "voids" Air Permit for Proposed Coal Heating Cogeneration Plant

Sierra Club applauds Northern Michigan University's decision to "void" its state-issued air pollution permit for a coal and wood fired heating and cogeneration plant on campus. The decision came after Sierra Club successfully appealed the permit issued a year ago by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The appeal led the USEPA's Environmental Appeals Board (EAB) to remand the permit back to the state agency to correct several deficiencies, most notably the failure to control carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide, two potent greenhouse gases.

The NMU decision to drop coal as part of its fuel mix in the heating plant makes it the 97th coal plant canceled in the USA since 2001. The university's decision to abandon coal is much more consistent with their efforts to move the campus forward with green technologies and energy efficiency. NMU became a member of the US Green Building Council in 2004 and in 2006 its Meyland Hall became the first LEED Certified building at any Michigan university as well as the first in the Upper Peninsula. NMU staff began researching possible wind and solar energy applications for the campus following the Sierra Club's successful appeal of the permit.