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## **Groups Take Action on Proposed Bay City Coal Plant**

### **Permit fails to protect public health from unnecessary and dirty coal plant**

CHICAGO (March 31, 2010) – Concerned environmental groups have taken action to protect Michigan's public health and clean energy future from Consumers Energy's proposed coal-fired power plant near Bay City, MI. Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and Sierra Club challenged the plant's recently issued air permit for not doing enough to limit harmful pollution and for the state's failure to fully consider cleaner, better alternatives for Michigan.

"Consumers' proposed \$3.57 billion coal plant is dirty, expensive, and unneeded," said Shannon Fisk, staff attorney for NRDC: "And to add insult to injury, it would exacerbate the already problematic issue of coal ash fouling Saginaw Bay. The state has the opportunity to rebuild its economy with cutting edge energy technologies which will create jobs and clean the air---but that only happens if state agencies and utility companies do the right thing. We need to implement these cleaner, modern alternatives."

"What Michigan needs is clean, reliable electricity, and Consumers Energy and the state are letting us down," said Anne Woiwode, State Director of Sierra Club's Michigan Chapter. "We have alternatives available to meet our state's electric needs, create many more good-paying jobs, and protect the health of our communities. Michigan families can't afford to carry the enormous burden of the state's failure to hold Consumers Energy accountable."

Consumers Energy is seeking to build a \$3.57 billion, 830 MW coal-fired power plant next to the existing Karn-Weadock generating station on the shores of Saginaw Bay. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources & Environment (MDNRE) issued an air pollution permit for the proposed plant that fails to address many important issues related to public health, such as failing to fully protect surrounding communities from dangerous fine particulate matter that can lodge deep inside the lungs and cause respiratory problems. The permit also fails to do enough to limit emissions of mercury, which has been linked to developmental problems in children.

Last year, NRDC released A Green Energy Alternative for Michigan, showing that aggressive energy efficiency programs combined with the potential of 27,000 GWh of power from cleaner energy technologies can fulfill the state's power needs. The state failed to properly evaluate these cleaner and more technologically advanced solutions in choosing to move the Consumers coal project forward. Although Consumers agreed to retire some existing coal-fired power generation by the end of 2017 as a condition to the permit, those aging plants were likely to be retired anyway, making this agreement little more than an empty shell.

Beyond the air pollution issues, concern has been raised about the additional pollution created by the coal ash resulting from the new plant's operations. According to the Bay City Times and state records, the two ash landfills at Karn-Weadock have been leaking toxics to Saginaw Bay for years, in excess of state standards meant to protect aquatic organisms, drinking water and public health. The new plant would create up to an additional 210,000 tons of dangerous coal ash waste annually.

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*The Natural Resources Defense Council is a national, nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has 1.2 million members and online activists, served from offices in New York, Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Beijing. <http://www.nrdc.org>*

*Since 1892, the Sierra Club has been working to protect communities, wild places, and the planet itself. Sierra Club is the oldest, largest, and most influential grassroots environmental organization in the United States.*