NEW REPORT FROM CLEAN AIR TASK FORCE DETAILS DEATHS AND OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACTS FROM COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS IN NEW YORK

STUDY SHOWS THAT CLEAN AIR LAWS CAN DRAMATICALLY REDUCE POLLUTION BUT THAT MUCH MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS CALL FOR FURTHER REDUCTIONS THROUGH EPA RULEMAKING, ENFORCEMENT AND LEGISLATIVE ACTION

(ALBANY, NY) -- In a landmark report released today, the Clean Air Task Force has determined that reducing emissions of fine particle pollution from coal-fired power plants, one of the top contributors of air pollution in the U.S., can have a direct and significant positive effect on public health, including here in New York.

“The Toll from Coal,” the third such study from CATF, follows on their 2000 and 2004 reports and documents the progress in using modern pollution control technologies to decrease emissions of SO2 and NOx, two of the most dangerous byproducts of coal combustion, and charts the progress to date in reducing the death and disease caused by coal-fired power plants.

The online version of the study also contains an interactive map that shows how the health risks and costs are distributed geographically, indicating that those areas with the highest concentration of coal plants bear a disproportionate share of negative public health impacts. New York, for example, ranks 22nd in mortality risk, while California, which has very few coal-fired power plants, ranks almost last (47th) for power plant mortality risk. However, because of its sizeable population, New York ranks third in total power plant impacts by state, and the New York metropolitan area (New York-Newark-Edison, NY-NJ-PA MSA) has the greatest total power plant impacts in the nation.
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In New York, researchers found that health impacts from coal-fired power plant emissions remain severe, with pollution from power plants estimated to cause 945 deaths and 796 hospitalizations per year.

“There’s no excuse in 2010 that power plant pollution cuts short the lives of nearly 1,000 people per year in New York when technology is available that could virtually eliminate this pollution,” said Laura Haight, senior environmental associate with NYPIRG. “We call upon EPA and Congress to finish the job of cleaning up power plant pollution.”

On a national level, other key findings of the report were:

- Coal-fired power plants remain among the top contributors to fine particle pollution, particularly SO2 and NOx, in the country. This pollution is expected to cause over 13,000 premature deaths in 2010, as well as almost 10,000 hospitalizations and more than 20,000 heart attacks per year.
- Since 2004, SO2 and NOx emissions have decreased by almost 50%, thanks to the installation of about 130 power plant scrubbers, mandated through a combination of enforcement of the Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) and New Source Review provisions of the Clean Air Act, and state power plant clean-up laws.
- These pollution reductions, which have occurred without noticeably affecting electricity prices or consumer bills, natural gas prices, or the reliability of the power system, will prevent almost 11,000 premature deaths in 2010.
- With existing technology, continued enforcement of existing laws and regulations, and stronger EPA regulation and new federal legislation, fine particle pollutant levels and mortality rates in this country can be driven further down at an accelerating rate. Hundreds of coal-fired power plants do not yet have scrubber technology, so there is still an enormous opportunity to significantly enhance public health.

“We have made a great deal of progress in reducing the public health costs of emissions from coal-fired power plants, but more needs to be done to ensure that modern pollution controls are operating at all coal-fired power plants,” said Scott T. Santarella, President and CEO of the American Lung Association in New York. “We need the EPA to adopt tighter limits on sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide emissions so we can improve lung health and finally put an end to the death toll from coal.”

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Santarella noted that according to the 2010 State of the Air Report issued by the American Lung Association in April, more than 12 million New Yorkers were living in counties where unhealthy air threatens their lives and health. Continuing to clean up air pollution generated by coal-fired plants would have a measurable impact on the quality of air New Yorkers breathe.

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**Clean Air Task Force** is a nonprofit organization founded in 1996 dedicated to reducing atmospheric pollution through research, advocacy and private sector collaboration. For more information, please visit us at [www.catf.us](http://www.catf.us).

**The American Lung Association in New York** ....
Now in its second century, the American Lung Association in New York is the leading statewide organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. With your generous support, the American Lung Association is "Fighting for Air" through research, education and advocacy. For more information about the American Lung Association, or to support our work, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or visit [www.alany.org](http://www.alany.org).

**The New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)** is a nonprofit organization founded in 1973. NYPIRG is New York’s largest environmental and consumer advocacy organization, with offices in New York City, Albany, Syracuse, Long Island, and 20 college campuses across the state. For more information, please visit us at [www.nypirg.org](http://www.nypirg.org).