Chicago Clean Power Coalition

April 5, 2010

Why Adopt a Clean Power Ordinance?

Protecting public health and welfare is a fundamental responsibility of government. Yet each year, Fisk and Crawford, two coal-fired power plants within the city limits of Chicago, emit thousands of tons of harmful air pollutants that directly affect the health of City residents.

Did You Know....

Fisk and Crawford are Chicago's largest sources of particulate-forming air pollution:[1]

- In the last three years alone, these plants combined have spewed over 45,000 tons of pollution into the air we breathe, compromising the health of all Chicagoans.[2]
- Particulate matter from the Fisk and Crawford coal-fired power plants impairs visibility and contributes to lung cancer, heart attacks, premature deaths, acute and chronic bronchitis, emergency room visits, asthma and other respiratory illnesses. Those who live closest to these plants are most affected, resulting in missed school days and work absenteeism.
- State and federal laws have so far failed to curb the negative effects of these plants.

Emissions are making us sick:

- Chicago has one of the highest asthma rates in the country.[3] Our asthma hospitalization rate is nearly double the national average.[4] [5]
- According to a 2001 study conducted by researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health, air pollution from Fisk and Crawford causes more than 40 deaths, 550 emergency room visits, and 2,800 asthma attacks annually.[6]

Chicago has the highest concentration of people living near coal plants in the nation:

- More people live near Fisk than any other power plant in the U.S. Crawford is second worst.The population density surrounding Fisk alone is nearly twice that of the third ranked plant.[7]
- Communities living next to these plants are among the most marginalized. Over 83% of Chicago's residents who live within three miles of the Fisk and Crawford plants are non-white.[8]

Fisk and Crawford also are two of Chicago's largest contributors to climate change. In 2007, combined they emitted nearly 5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO_2) into the atmosphere. This is equivalent to the emissions from 872,042 cars.[9]

What Is Proposed?

A Clean Power Ordinance will be introduced to City Council to clean up Fisk and Crawford:

- 49th Ward Alderman Joe Moore plans to introduce an ordinance to the City Council that will require Fisk and Crawford to reduce their emissions of particulates and carbon dioxide.
- Pursuant to its home rule authority, the City can adopt regulations for the protection of the public health, safety and welfare of its residents. Chicago already has regulated air pollutants and particulate matter through its Air Quality Ordinance.

How will the Chicago Clean Power Ordinance Affect Fisk and Crawford?

- The technology exists to significantly reduce emissions of particulate matter and CO_2, such as the use of natural gas as the primary fuel. In fact, natural gas can be used to operate both plants[10],.[11]
- The ordinance has a four year phase in process that gives the owners of the plants adequate time to comply.

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There Is a Better Way...and Chicago Can Take the Lead!

Now is the time for Chicago to begin the transition to a clean energy future. The Clean Power Ordinance is consistent with Chicago's commitment to lower its greenhouse gas emissions and create new jobs.[12] Adopting this Ordinance will make a strong statement that the health and safety of Chicago's residents is a high priority.

Exelon and SunPower Corp. recently completed the nation's largest urban solar power plant (on a former industrial site on Chicago's southeast side). Solar energy generates at least *five times* the number of permanent jobs compared to coal power plants. Also, solar facilities can be built quickly, and construction jobs are needed now.

The demand for coal can be reduced through energy efficiency.
Chicago's Climate Action Plan is expected to generate a demand for up to 2,500 energy efficiency-related jobs each year, plus create hundreds of jobs annually in areas such as renewable energy installation; green roof design and installation; and collection, processing, resale and reuse of recycled materials.[13]

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[1] Center for Neighborhood Technology. 2008. Chicago Greenhouse Gas Emissions: An Inventory, Forecast and Mitigation Analysis for Chicago and the Metropolitan Region. An Assessment prepared for the City of Chicago.

[2] Clean Air Markets - Data and Maps. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. http://camddataandmaps.epa.gov.

[3] Cagney, PhD, Kathleen A. and Christopher R. Browning, PhD. 2004. Exploring Neighborhood-level Variation in Asthma and other Respiratory Diseases: The Contribution of Neighborhood Social Context. Journal of Internal Medicine. Springer New York. Volume 19, Number 3 / March, 2004.

[4] National Health Interview Survey. 1998. (Provided by Dr. Sandra Thomas, Chicago Department of Public Health.)

[5] Mannino et. al. 2002. "Surveillance for Asthma – United States, 1980-1999." Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. CDC.

[6] Levy, Jonathan I., John D. Spengler, et. al. 2001. Using CALPUFF to evaluate the impacts of power plant emissions in Illinois: model sensitivity and implications. Atmospheric Environment 10 September 2001.

[7] Center for Media and Democracy 2010. SourceWatch. Coal plants near residential areas.

[8] Center for Media and Democracy 2010. SourceWatch. Coal plants near residential areas.

[9] Abrams, C. 2009. America's Biggest Polluters: Carbon Dioxide Emissions from Power Plants in 2007. Environment America Research & Policy Center.

[10] Midwest Generation. Fisk Generating Station Fact Sheet. 2005.

[11] Midwest Generation. Crawford Generating Station Fact Sheet. 2005.

[12] City of Chicago. 2008. Chicago Climate Action Plan.

[13] Schrock, G. and Sundquist, E. 2009. Potential Workforce Impacts of the Chicago Climate Action Plan: Quantitative and Qualitative Assessments, University of Illinois at Chicago, Center for Urban Economic Development.