



Sierra Club Illinois and Prairie Rivers Network Announce Motion to Intervene in Lawsuit Against Notorious Coal Company Sugar Camp Energy

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FRANKLIN COUNTY, IL. - Yesterday, Sierra Club Illinois and Prairie Rivers Network joined the Illinois Attorney General's Office in their lawsuit against Sugar Camp Energy, LLC by filing a Motion to Intervene. Sugar Camp Energy is a subsidiary of Foresight Energy, which is the largest privately-owned coal company in the country, and operates Sugar Camp Mine, which is the country's [7th largest coal mine](#), in Southern Illinois. Attorney General Raoul's office filed their suit in January 2022 after mine operators [dumped 46,000 gallons of firefighting foam](#), including at least 660 gallons of concentrated PFAS-based foam, deep into the underground coal mine in an unsuccessful attempt to extinguish a fire. While the Attorney General's lawsuit describes Sugar Camp's violations of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act, Sierra Club Illinois and Prairie Rivers Network assert that Sugar Camp Energy also violated the Clean Water Act and Sugar Camp's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit in their actions. Sierra Club Illinois, Prairie Rivers Network, and the Great Rivers Environmental Law Center have a specific interest in protecting the ecosystem and recreational resources of the Akin Creek and the Big Muddy River. Sugar Camp Energy violated their own NPDES permit and the Clean Water Act when they discharged PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, into these local watersheds when using PFAS-based firefighting foam at the coal mine in September 2021. PFAS are highly persistent "forever chemicals" that, when ingested, can lead to serious health problems including cancer and organ and immune system damage. Sugar Camp Energy and its related corporations have a long history of violations of environmental statutes like the Clean Water Act, and must be held accountable for each violation of the laws that seek to protect Illinois communities and our shared environment. "We applaud Attorney General Raoul for seeking to hold Sugar Camp Energy, LLC accountable, and we are moving to join this case to help ensure there is complete relief for the environmental damage they've caused," says Sierra Club Illinois Director Jack Darin. "Knowingly dumping toxic PFAS chemicals underground at Sugar Camp Mine was against the law, puts local communities at risk, and is yet another reminder that Illinois must move beyond fossil fuels to safer, renewable energy options." "The public has a right to healthy, undamaged water systems," says Andrew Rehn, Water Resources Engineer with Prairie Rivers Network. "Sugar Camp Mine has failed to ensure toxic pollutants like PFAS are not discharged into Akin Creek and Middle Fork Big Muddy River, and must be held accountable for the harm they have caused to both the local community and to downstream watersheds." Sierra Club Illinois and Prairie Rivers Network, represented by Great Rivers Environmental Law Center and Albert Ettinger, [previously filed a Notice of Intent to sue](#) Sugar Camp Energy LLC and related entities. After the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) investigated the violations described in Sierra Club and Prairie Rivers Network's Notice of Intent to sue, the IEPA issued a notice of violation to Sugar Camp Energy, LLC. The Illinois Attorney General's Office subsequently sued Sugar Camp Energy in January 2022.

Sierra Club Illinois and Prairie Rivers Network's Motion to Intervene filed yesterday in the Circuit Court of Franklin County, Illinois, adds additional defendants and additional complaints to the Attorney General's suit. *Great Rivers Environmental Law Center* *Great Rivers is a public interest law firm that provides free legal services to individuals, organizations, and citizen groups who are working to protect the environment and public health in Missouri and Southern Illinois. To learn more please visit www.greatriverslaw.org.* *Prairie Rivers Network* *At Prairie Rivers Network (PRN), we protect water, heal land, and inspire change. Using the creative power of science, law, and collective action, we protect and restore our rivers, return healthy soils and diverse wildlife to our lands, and transform how we care for the earth and for each other. PRN is the Illinois affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation. To learn more please visit www.prairierivers.org.* *Sierra Club* *The Sierra Club is America's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3.8 million members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person's right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit www.sierraclub.org.*