



# **Sierra Club Sues Prairie State Generating Company For Operating Prairie State Coal Plant Without A Title V Permit**

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ALTON - Today, Sierra Club Illinois announced a lawsuit against Prairie State Generating Co. (PSGC) for operating the Prairie State Energy Campus (PSEC) without a permit. Sierra Club's lawsuit urges PSGC to cease operations until it obtains a lawful CAAPP (also known as a Title V) permit required by the Clean Air Act. The Prairie State coal plant is one of the dirtiest and deadliest plants in the United States.

“No plant is above the law, especially one that is among the most polluting coal plants in the country,” said Christine Nannicelli, Senior Campaign Representative for the Beyond Coal Campaign of Sierra Club Illinois. “PSEC’s owners, like the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency (IMEA) and the Northern Illinois Municipal Power Agency (NIMPA), are actively pursuing federal taxpayer subsidies and investors to install carbon capture technology at the plant. Prairie State should instead be focused on complying with basic environmental laws like the Clean Air Act, not pushing for more taxpayer subsidies for risky, expensive technologies.”

In 2021, Prairie State exceeded federal limits on mercury emissions for a month, prompting a Violation Notice from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), which was issued in January 2022. In 2022, Prairie State emitted almost twice as much carbon dioxide as the next biggest greenhouse gas polluter in the state, and has been the number one contributor in Illinois to ozone-forming nitrogen oxide pollution for the last six years. Soot pollution from the plant contributes to 76 premature deaths each year, making it one of the deadliest coal plants in the country, according to a recently released [study on soot pollution from coal plants](#) by the Sierra Club, which used triennial emissions inventory data.

“Prairie State is now on notice that it can no longer operate in violation of the Clean Air Act,” said Megan Wachspress, Staff Attorney with the Sierra Club Environmental Law Program. “A Title V permit is a fundamental operating requirement for major stationary sources under the Clean Air Act. These permits include limits on how much mercury, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, and carbon monoxide a plant is permitted to emit and impose monitoring and reporting requirements. The people of Illinois must also have the opportunity to comment on the terms of the Title V permit to ensure the IEPA protects their health from Prairie State. By filing this lawsuit, Sierra Club aims to protect Illinoisans and our environment from the Prairie State coal plant’s egregious, decade-long mismanagement and deadly pollution.”

The Prairie State coal plant is owned by nine utilities that serve 277 municipal utilities and rural electric cooperatives across eight states. The plant owners signed contracts directly or indirectly committing themselves to paying off the \$5 billion price tag to build PSEC.

“Like many of my fellow Naperville residents, when I learned about our ownership of the Prairie State coal plant, I decided that we need to take responsibility for the environmental and climate impacts of this plant and for transitioning our ownership to clean energy,” said Greg Hubert, a resident of Naperville, Illinois, which is the largest municipal member of IMEA that purchases coal power from Prairie State. “We’ve tried

to obtain plans, projections, and financial statements but we've been blocked. Since day one of our city's entanglement with Prairie State, we citizen owners have been blocked from information on Prairie State."

"City leaders were sold an investment in Prairie State with the promise of cheap electricity and 'clean coal.' Neither promise has been fulfilled," said Jean Korte, a resident of Highland, Illinois, just 40 miles north of the Prairie State coal plant and member of IMEA. "Citizens, and especially our children and grandchildren, deserve power that does not pollute 'at will,' break the law, and steal the health and welfare from our future."