

Powering Past Coal *at the Four Corners Power Plant*

A Major Health Threat

- The Four Corners Power Plant in San Juan County, New Mexico generates 2,040 megawatts of electricity from five coal-fired boilers, primarily to power California and Arizona.¹ The plant is primarily owned and operated by Arizona Public Service Company.
- The Four Corners Power Plant is located on the Navajo Nation and primarily impacts indigenous communities in the region.
- The power plant is the largest source of nitrogen oxide gases, or NOx, in the United States.² NOx react with sunlight to form smog, are respiratory irritants, and contribute to haze and acid rain.³
- In 2009, the power plant released 12,449 tons of sulfur dioxide, which forms acid rain and poses myriad health risks.⁴
- The power plant annually contributes to 44 premature deaths, 800 asthma attacks, 42 asthma-related emergency room visits, and other health impacts, at an estimated cost of more than \$340,000,000.⁵
- Every year, the power plant releases more than 16,000,000 tons of carbon dioxide, the amount released by 2.8 million passenger vehicles.⁶
- The power plant releases a number of other poisons, including 487 pounds of mercury, a potent neurotoxin, 10,197 pound of selenium, 10,199 pounds of benzene, a known carcinogen, and more than 9 million pounds of hydrochloric acid.⁷



Four Corners Power Plant in northwestern New Mexico (photo AP).

A Clean Air Solution?

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has proposed a plan to retrofit the Four Corners Power Plant to limit haze-forming air pollution.⁸

¹ http://www.aps.com/general_info/aboutAPS_18.html.

² According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, <http://www.epa.gov/region9/air/navajo/index.html#proposed>.

³ <http://www.epa.gov/air/nitrogenoxides/health.html>.

⁴ <http://www.epa.gov/airquality/sulfurdioxide/health.html>.

⁵ See Four Corners Power Plant data at http://www.catf.us/coal/problems/power_plants/existing/map.php?state=New_Mexico.

⁶ According to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency greenhouse gas converter, <http://www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/energy-resources/calculator.html#results>.

⁷ According to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory, http://iaspub.epa.gov/airsdata/adnti.site_detail?siteid=350450002&emis=A&year=2002&geoinfo=st~NM~New%20Mexico.

- At the same time, Arizona Public Service Company has proposed a plan to shutdown three of the five coal-fired boilers at the power plant, and retrofit the remaining two.⁹
- **Both plans fall short of protecting clean air and public health.**
- Under the EPA's plan, the Four Corners Power Plant would install modern controls to limit NOx pollution, but would still allow the plant to pollute as much as 80% more than comparably controlled power plants. Worse, the EPA has proposed only a plant-wide limit on NOx, meaning that some of the boilers would not have to be cleaned up. Sulfur dioxide emissions would not be controlled.
- Arizona Public Service's plan would shutdown units 1-3, and keep units 4 and 5 open. Units 4 and 5 are the largest boilers at the power plant, together comprising nearly 80% of the plant's generating capacity.
- Units 4 and 5 release the vast majority of NOx, sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide, and other harmful air pollution at the power plant.¹⁰
- Even if Arizona Public Service Company retrofitted units 4 and 5, the plant would remain one of the greatest health threats in the region because of mercury and other air toxics, and would continue to release more than 10,000,000 tons of carbon dioxide.

Clean Energy Solutions at Hand

- Arizona Public Service must invest in clean energy and develop a plan to retire all five coal-fired boilers at the Four Corners Power Plant.
- A conservative estimate indicates that more than 2,500 megawatts of solar and wind could be developed in the Four Corners region, including the Navajo Nation more cheaply than coal. The overall renewable energy potential in the Four Corners is far greater.¹¹
- A just transition is needed to sustain indigenous communities in the Four Corners region.

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⁸ <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/2dd7f669225439b78525735900400c31/cff8c4fd926040ff852577b40072d399!OpenDocument>.

⁹ <http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9JD9P2O0.htm>.

¹⁰ See emissions data posted at http://www.wildearthguardians.org/site/DocServer/Clean_Air_Markets_-_Data_and_Maps.pdf?docID=803&AddInterest=1230.

¹¹ See report on energy and economic alternatives for Desert Rock coal-fired power plant, <http://www.sanjuancitizens.org/air/Jan%202008%20-%20Alternatives%20to%20Desert%20Rock%20Full%20Report-Dine%20CARE.pdf>.