

P.E.R.R.O.

Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization

La Organización sobre Derechos y Reformas Ambientales de Pilsen

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Para la prensa

Coal-Fired Power Plants in Chicago

The Crawford and Fisk power plants are the two largest sources of



particulate-forming air pollution in Chicago and contribute to the area exceeding federal health standards for particle pollution.

The **Fisk Generating Station at 1111 W. Cermak** (*shown at right, in Pilsen*) and the **Crawford Generating Station at 3501 S. Pulaski** (in Little Village) are owned by Midwest Generation, a subsidiary of California-based Edison International, a corporation which sells electricity to Commonwealth Edison. None of the power generated at Fisk and Crawford is actually sold to Illinois utilities, but rather is used to maintain reliability of the electrical grid during peak times. Chicago residents are therefore bearing the ill health effects of dirty plants that send their product elsewhere.

Plantas de energía corridas por carbón en Chicago

Las plantas de energía corridas por carbón plantean una gran amenaza a la salud humana, y hay dos de ellas cerca—una en Pilsen y una en La Villita—poseído por la compañía Midwest Generation y utilizado generar la electricidad para ComEd. La planta de Fisk está situada en W. 1111 Cermak, y la planta de Crawford está situada en 3501 S. Pulaski.

Las plantas de energía corridas por carbón son plantas más viejas, son muchas de las cuales son exentas de aumentar sus instalaciones y de reducir su contaminación porque fueron establecidas mucho antes de que el Acto Limpio del Aire de 1977 estándares y límites creados a la contaminación atmosférica.

El sistema recientemente instituido de los “créditos de la contaminación” apunta reducir la contaminación atmosférica nacionalmente permitiendo que las compañías se vendan un número limitado de los permisos de la contaminación. Sin embargo, este sistema tiene un defecto importante: todavía permite que la contaminación pesada sea concentrada en las áreas que tienen menos poder político—donde los residentes tienen rentas más bajas. Éste es el concepto de la injusticia ambiental. La localización de Fisk y de Crawford es una injusticia ambiental porque contribuye una cantidad desproporcionado alta de contaminación a las vecindades de la clase obrera de Pilsen y La Villita.

According to the most recent data available (2003–04), the two plants combined emit:

- **230 lbs of mercury**, which causes brain damage [1];
- **17,765 tons of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide**, which cause ozone and acid rain, and become particulate matter that contributes to breathing problems such as asthma [2];
- **260,000 lbs of soot** [3]

Like most coal-fired power plants in Illinois, because of their age, the Fisk and Crawford power plants are exempt from federal regulations that require modern pollution control devices. The Fisk plant was most recently rebuilt in 1958 and Crawford in 1959. The idea behind “grandfathering” the 1950s-era plants in the 1977 Federal Clean Air Act was that the dirty old plants were going to be replaced by more modern, cleaner plants in a matter of years. This was costly error in judgment we are still suffering through and fighting to correct.

The current federal framework for reducing power-plant pollution nationwide, the so-called “cap and trade” program, allows heavy pollution to be concentrated in areas that are home to people who are most vulnerable to the ill health effects from it, areas with lower-income individuals and minorities who are disenfranchised from the political process and power structure. This is the core concept of environmental injustice.

In fact, according to a 2004 study by the League of United Latin American Citizens, 7 in 10 hispanics live in counties that violate air pollution standards.

Citations:

1, 3. See EPA TRI database for zipcode [60608](#) and [60623](#) and scroll down for "Crawford" in

Mas información en español

[“Aire de Injusticia: De que manera afecta la contaminación a la salud de los hispanos y latinos.”](#) League of Latin American Citizens, 2004

60623 or "Fisk" in 60608

2. See [EPA Clean Air Markets](#) site and navigate to find each facility

Sign yourself or your organization on to the Clean Power Coalition

The [American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago](#) and its partners have launched a campaign to significantly reduce air pollution from the local Crawford and Fisk coal-fired power plants. The Chicago Clean Power Coalition is working to pass a Chicago city ordinance that requires the strictest pollution reductions achievable through "Best Available Control Technology," which can include scrubbers and catalytic reduction devices.

The Crawford and Fisk coal-fired power plants are the two largest single sources of deadly particulate-forming air pollution in Chicago and contribute to the region's violations of federal particulate pollution health standards.

Air pollution from these two plants is linked to over 40 deaths, 550 emergency room visits, and 2,800 asthma attacks annually, according to researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health ([see full report](#)). Chicago is known as the asthma epicenter of the nation. In Chicago, the asthma hospitalization rate is nearly double the national average. In some Chicago neighborhoods, over 25% of children under the age of twelve suffer from asthma.

With your help, we can pass an ordinance that will save lives and avoid hospitalizations and illnesses. Please sign on to support the campaign and join the coalition. For more information, please

contact Brian Urbaszewski, Director of Environmental Health Program, American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago, (312) 628-0245, burbaszewski@alamc.org.

Current organizational members of the Clean Power Coalition include:

- [Alivio Medical Center](#)
- [American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago](#)
- [Illinois Environmental Council](#)
- [Illinois Public Interest Research Group](#)
- [Little Village Environmental Justice Organization](#)
- [Pilsen/Southwest Side Local of the Green Party](#)
- [Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization](#)
- [Sierra Club - Illinois Chapter](#)

Endorse the Clean Power Coalition

[Sign on your organization to the CPC](#) [PDF file to mail/fax]

[Sign on as an individual member of CPC](#) [PDF file to mail/fax]

Call your alderman!

Call your alderman and ask him or her to co-sponsor the Clean Power Ordinance, which has been in City Council since 2002 but on which there have not been any hearings. This proposal would reduce the pollution from Fisk and Crawford by 66%. Urge your elected officials not to take campaign contributions from Midwest Generation.

Resources and news

Media coverage

[“EPA chief turns coal lobbyist: Mercury foe now represents a top polluter,”](#) by Michael Hawthorne, *Chicago Tribune*, February 9, 2006 [PDF file]

[“Madigan says EPA goes easy on coal plants,”](#) by Michael Hawthorne, *Chicago Tribune*, August 29, 2005

[“Speaking of Clean Air . . .”](#) by Mick Dumke, *Chicago Reader* cover story, December 16, 2005 [PDF file]

[“Something in the Air”](#) by Kari Lydersen, *Chicago Reader* cover story, March 28, 2003

[“Dying for Power: Clear Skies and Dirty Coal Plants”](#) by Dave Aftandilian, *Conscious Choice*, June 2002

Fact sheet on coal power

[Illinois’ Dirty Power Plants](#), fact sheet by Clear the Air, a non-profit based in Washington, D.C.

EPA information

[Pollution in Little Village zip code 60623](#) (EPA Toxic Release Inventory)

[Pollution in Pilsen zip code 60608](#) (EPA Toxic Release Inventory)

[Fisk facts](#), Scorecard.org

[Crawford facts](#), Scorecard.org

[“The Plain English Guide to the Clean Air Act,”](#) EPA

Harvard School of Public Health Study of Illinois Power Plants, 2002

[Summary of mortality findings](#) [PDF file]

Full papers, published in *Atmospheric Environment*, 2002:

- [Using CALPUFF to evaluate the impacts of power plant emissions in Illinois: model sensitivity and implications by Jonathan I. Levya,*](#), [John D. Spenglera](#), [Dennis Hlinkab](#), [David Sullivanb](#), [Dennis Moonc](#) [PDF file]
- [Comments on: Using CALPUFF to evaluate the impacts of power plant emissions in Illinois: model sensitivity and implications by Michael R. Amesa](#), [Stephen G. Zembaa](#), [Robert J. Yamartino](#) [PDF file]
- [Letter to the editor, Authors' response, Jonathan I. Levya,*](#), [John D. Spenglera](#), [Dennis Hlinkab](#), [David Sullivanb](#), [Dennis Moonc](#) [PDF file]

CPC press releases and related information

[CPC press release for February 13, 2006 public hearing on Fisk and Crawford](#) [Word file]

[Letter from Clean Power Coalition to Attorney General Lisa Madigan](#),
March 24, 2006 [Word file]

[American Lung Association "State of the Air 2005"](#)

[Coal-Fired Power Plant Ordinance Reintroduced Today Before the Newly Seated City Council](#), Chicago City Council Committee on Finance, May 7, 2003

[Text of the proposed Clean Power Ordinance](#) (2002, not adopted)

Environmental justice

[“Air of Injustice: How Pollution Affects the Health of Hispanics and Latinos,”](#) League of Latin American Citizens, 2004 [PDF file]

Asthma information

[Chicago Asthma Fact Sheet,](#) American Lung Association, 2005 [PDF file]

[“Don’t Breathe Easy: Experts link record rates of inner-city asthma to diminished air quality”](#) by Brian H. Kehrl, *In These Times*, June 4, 2004

[“Chicago’s Coughin’”](#) by Kari Lydersen, *Clamor* magazine, July/August 2003

[“Asthma’s ground zero,”](#) by Jeanne Galatzer, *Chicago Tribune* magazine, April 27, 2003 [PAID SUBSCRIPTION ONLY]

Mercury information

[The Mercury Cycle,](#) Sierra Club
(explains how mercury enters water from coal-burning power plants)

[Mercury in the Environment,](#) U.S. Geological Survey

[“Don't Eat That Fish: More Mercury Will Be the Legacy of More Coal-Burning Plants”](#) by Kari Lydersen, InfoShop, 2005

PERRO is a grassroots community organization located in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago. For more information, please contact Dorian Breuer at (312) 315-4950 or email stop.polluting.pilsen@gmail.com.