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Statement of the Clean Air Task Force on the Honorable Judge Collyer's decision entering the consent decree in American Nurses Association, et al. v. U.S. EPA:

WASHINGTON, April 15 -- An historic agreement reached between eleven environmental and public health organizations and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, under which the Agency agrees to issue stringent standards controlling the toxic air emissions from the nation's existing and new coal- and oil-fired electric power plants to the maximum achievable extent, was approved this morning by U.S. District Court Judge Rosemary Collyer of the District of Columbia. Judge Collyer approved the agreement over the objections of the Utility Air Regulatory Group, after a public hearing held on April 13 in Washington, D.C.

Under the terms of the agreement, national standards for this industry will be finalized by November 16, 2011. "EPA's own data show that coal- and oil-fired power plants are the largest unregulated industrial emitters of toxic air emissions, including mercury, arsenic, nickel, chromium, cadmium, acid gases, and dioxins. EPA has been in a position to regulate this industry since 2000, and this landmark decision is a huge win in creating a healthier environment for all Americans," said Ann B. Weeks, who represented environmental and public health plaintiffs The Ohio Environmental Council, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Izaak Walton League of America, Environment America, and Conservation Law Foundation, at oral argument before the Court.

"We welcome the Court's decision," said Earthjustice attorney James Pew, who served as local counsel for plaintiffs. "It ends the litigation and lets the real work begin: cleaning our air and water of the toxins that coal- and oil-fired power plants have been filling them with for far too long."

Earthjustice appeared on the briefs for plaintiffs Sierra Club and Environmental Defense Fund in this proceeding. Other attorneys on the briefs included John Suttles of the Southern Environmental Law Center, for American Nurses Association and Physicians for Social Responsibility, John Walke for the Natural Resources Defense Council, Jon Mueller for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and Scott Edwards for Waterkeeper Alliance.

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