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## Citizens Settle Clean Air Case After AEP Commits to Record Pollution Cuts

Columbus, OH -- Earlier today, the Clean Air Task Force, the Environmental Law and Policy Center, and the Natural Resources Defense Council, in conjunction with the US Environmental Protection Agency and eight states, finalized the single largest environmental settlement ever in terms of air pollution reductions. The defendant in the case, American Electric Power (AEP), agreed to install \$4.6 billion worth of pollution control equipment on its power plants, provide \$60 million to fund environmental mitigation projects, and pay a record \$15 million fine.

The case, *United States v. American Electric Power Service Corp.*, was filed in the US District Court in Columbus, Ohio, in 1999 and alleged that AEP violated the Clean Air Act by failing to obtain permits for pollution-increasing modifications it made at 30 of its coal-fired generating units. Air pollution from coal-fired power plants and other industrial sources throughout the United States is responsible for asthma attacks, respiratory disease, heart attacks, and premature death suffered by hundreds of thousand of Americans every year. If the Clean Air Act provision at issue in this case was fully enforced at all coal-fired power plants, at least 4,300 premature deaths and 80,000 asthma attacks would be avoided annually.\*

Today's settlement is a giant step in that direction. The agreement obligates AEP to significantly cut back the amount of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides emitted by the 16 coal-fired power plants in its system. AEP must reduce its power plants' annual nitrogen oxide emissions from their current level of 231,000 tons to 72,000 tons by 2016. By 2018, the company has to cut the plants' annual sulfur dioxide emissions by 654,000 tons – a 79% reduction in pollution as compared to 2006.

“The enormous reductions required under this settlement will, over time, result in less fine particle pollution, less acid rain, and less smog throughout AEP's service area and across the Eastern United States,” said Jonathan Lewis, an attorney for the Clean Air Task Force.

Altogether, thirteen state, regional, and national citizens groups represented by CATF, EPLC, and NRDC participated in the settlement. The plaintiff groups, which have more than million members around the country, are: Ohio Citizen Action, Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana, Hoosier Environmental Council, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, West Virginia Environmental Council, Clean Air Council, Izaak Walton League of America, United States Public Interest Research Group, National Wildlife Federation, Indiana Wildlife Federation, League of Ohio Sportsmen, Sierra Club, and Natural Resources Defense Council.

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*The Clean Air Task Force is a nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring clean air and healthy environments through scientific research, public education, and legal advocacy.*

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\* See: CATF, *Power to Kill*, at 10-11 (<http://www.catf.us/publications/view/10>); CATF, *Dirty Air, Dirty Power* (<http://www.catf.us/publications/view/24>).