

REPORT: GLOBAL WARMING EMISSIONS FROM COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS IN U.S. TO RISE IN 2013 AFTER LONG DECLINE

Coal-Based Generation Projected To Increase Nearly 9 Percent in 2013; Worst 5 States for 2012 Coal-Based CO2 Pollution Are TX, FL, PA, IN, OH.

WASHINGTON, DC//May 23, 2013//After a major fall-off in carbon dioxide (CO₂) pollution from coal-fired electric power plants of 13.1 percent between 2005 and 2012, the first quarter of 2013 has seen a substantial jump in carbon dioxide emissions from coal – a 7.1 percent increase in the first three months of 2013 compared to the same period last year, according to a new Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) analysis of recent data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). The drop in carbon dioxide emissions between 2005 and 2012 is due in large part to greater reliance on natural gas, the rapid development of wind energy, moderate demand, and the closure of aging coal plants to avoid pollution control requirements.

Global warming emissions from coal-based electricity are projected to continue to increase throughout 2013, as rising natural gas prices encourage more use of coal. The latest projections from the EIA indicate that coal-based generation will increase 8.7 percent this year compared to last, although it is not expected to return to the peak levels of 5 to 10 years ago.

Available online at <http://www.environmentalintegrity.org>, the EIP report also highlights the five states and power plants that were the worst offenders when it came to CO₂ emissions in 2012. Texas emitted the most tons of CO₂ in 2012 from its coal-based electricity generation: 251 million tons, virtually unchanged from 2005, and more than twice the amount emitted by electric generators in any other single state. The second worst offender was Florida, followed by Pennsylvania, Indiana and Ohio. These five states accounted for nearly a third of total CO₂ emissions from power plants in the U.S. last year.

Environmental Integrity Project Director Eric Schaeffer said: **As natural gas gets more expensive, coal is finding its way back into the U.S. electricity generation picture, and that means higher carbon dioxide emissions. Although power companies plan to retire 45 gigawatts of coal capacity through 2016 due to low natural gas prices, the increased availability of renewables, moderate demand, and the cost of complying with long delayed Clean Air Act rules, a change in just one of those factors (natural gas prices) can encourage plant operators to squeeze more generation out of remaining coal plants.**

The Energy Information Administration projects that natural gas prices will increase about 34 percent above 2012 levels while prices for coal remain flat, making it attractive to power companies with the capacity to switch to cheaper fuels.

Additional highlights of the EIP report include the following:

- With natural gas prices at unusually low levels in 2012, gas-fired generation reached a new height of 1.23 billion megawatt hours in 2012, an increase of more than 60 percent since 2005, while electricity from coal declined nearly 25 percent over the same period.
- Wind powered generation, which releases no greenhouse gas emissions at all, climbed to nearly 141 million megawatt hours in 2012, a more than sevenfold increase from 2005. It is expected to increase an additional 30 percent by 2014.
- Demand for U.S. electricity is expected to increase only about 1 percent according to the EIA, following flat demand over the last seven years.

Schaeffer added: **“Natural gas releases about half as much carbon dioxide as coal when burned for electricity, but its price can swing widely and that volatility encourages companies to hang on to dirty and inefficient coal plants. It is time for states who have been slow to embrace energy**

efficiency or no-carbon renewables like wind and solar to step up if we want to decrease global warming emissions in the long term.”

Additional state-specific findings in the report include the following

- States that still depend on coal emit far more carbon dioxide per megawatt hour (MWh) of electricity generated than those with a more diverse mix of fuels and renewable sources of power. Kentucky was the worst offender in 2012 when it comes to power plants emitting the most carbon dioxide per MWh. It emitted more CO₂ than any other state, nearly twice the national average, and more than four times the state-wide emission rate for California's power plants.
- Second on the list of states emitting the most CO₂ per MWh was Wyoming, followed by West Virginia, Indiana and North Dakota.
- The five states with the lowest CO₂ emission rates for the amount of electricity produced are: Idaho (lowest), Washington, Vermont, Oregon and Connecticut.

Emissions data was obtained from the US Environmental Protection Agency's Air Markets Program Database, while net generation data was obtained from the U.S. Energy Information Administration's latest reports.

ABOUT EIP

The Environmental Integrity Project (<http://www.environmentalintegrity.org>) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization established in March of 2002 by former EPA enforcement attorneys to advocate for effective enforcement of environmental laws. EIP has three goals: 1) to provide objective analyses of how the failure to enforce or implement environmental laws increases pollution and affects public health; 2) to hold federal and state agencies, as well as individual corporations, accountable for failing to enforce or comply with environmental laws; and 3) to help local communities obtain the protection of environmental laws.

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