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### **Appalachian Mountain Club Supports States' Legal Action Against EPA's Clean Air Assault**

BOSTON, MA — The Appalachian Mountain Club today voiced support for a plan by nine states to file a federal lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency for recent Clean Air Act revisions they say will lead to dirtier air in the Northeast.

The attorneys general of the six New England states as well as New York, New Jersey, and Maryland announced plans to file suit following the federal EPA's Nov. 22 release of new and proposed rules that effectively exempt operators of power plants and other sources of industrial pollution from key provisions of the Clean Air Act.

"The EPA's action strips away the safeguards offered by the New Source Review provisions of the Clean Air Act and will make it easier for older power plants to expand and pump out more pollution, while removing incentives to make those facilities cleaner and more efficient," said Andrew J. Falender, executive director of the AMC. "These revisions are nothing less than an assault on public health. We applaud the state attorneys general for fighting this unfortunate action," he said.

The AMC also lauded Maine's Congressional delegation, which has been outspoken in its opposition to the Administration's plan to weaken the Clean Air Act. "The Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states are on the receiving end of pollution spewed by large, coal-fired power plants to our west and carried here on prevailing winds," said Georgia Murray, air quality scientist for the AMC. "Given its location, Maine is especially vulnerable. In fact, the AMC's research has shown that the air reaching the coast of Maine is frequently as dirty as the air in urban centers."

"This weakening of Clean Air Act provisions is likely to lead to reduced visibility, dirtier air, and increased incidences of respiratory and cardiac illness throughout the region," she said.

"The Maine delegation's courageous opposition to this gutting of key clean air provisions serves as a good example for the delegations throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states," said Falender. "We encourage those in Congress to speak out against attempts to weaken the Clean Air Act and to call for future legislation that holds all industrial polluters, new and old, to the same standards," he said.

Previously, federal law required the oldest and dirtiest "grandfathered" power plants and refineries to install modern pollution controls whenever they make major modifications that substantially increase pollution. This rollback of clean air standards provides polluters with more loopholes to increase emissions without installing up-to-date clean-air technologies.

"Pollutants from power plants are known to increase asthma and emphysema incidence rates. They shroud our state and national parks in haze, acidify lakes and streams, weaken and kill trees in mountain forests, and chemically alter soils," said Murray. "Numerous studies over the past decade have objectively quantified substantial health, ecological, and natural resource impacts of air pollution," Murray said.

The AMC has been monitoring smog, acid rain, and pollutants in cloud water on New Hampshire's Mount Washington since 1983. In addition, the AMC has conducted scientific studies on the relationships between air pollution and hiker health with the Harvard School of Public Health and Brigham and Women's Hospital.

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