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No New Coal Plants Started in 2009 Year End State of Coal

Washington, DC: No new coal plants broke ground in 2009, a result of a combination of widespread public opposition, rising costs, increasing financial risks and concerns over future carbon regulations. In 2009 twenty-six coal-fired power plants—which would have emitted 146 million tons of carbon dioxide annually-- were defeated or abandoned. This progress opens the way for a transition to a clean energy economy, including a 22.5% increase in electricity generated from wind between 2008 and 2009.

Total coal use is down in 2009 according to the [Energy Information Agency](#), as the Obama administration is considering new regulations for the safe disposal of coal ash, and limiting emissions of mercury, soot, smog and global warming pollution from coal plants.

From the mine, to the plant, to the ash, 2009 has not been a good year for the coal industry. The Obama Administration has blocked most new permits to bury streams with waste as part of mountaintop removal mining operations, and is also increasing oversight of existing mining operations in Appalachia. The largest new consumer of mountaintop removal coal, the Santee Cooper coal plant planned for South Carolina, will not be moving forward.

Neither will plans to significantly expand the export of coal from the Powder River Basin. After a decade-long fight, the Dakota Minnesota & Eastern Railroad project was abandoned in August. The DM&E rail project would have carried enough coal to power about 50 medium size coal plants.

Among the coal plants defeated or abandoned this year are the massive American Municipal Power coal plant proposed in Ohio and the Big Stone II plant in South Dakota. Developers pulled the plug on both projects, despite having successfully finished the permitting process, because of rising concerns about the sharply escalating costs and the promise of future carbon regulations. A new [Washington Post survey](#) found that almost two-thirds of Americans support federal regulations to reduce global warming pollution from power plants.

Since the beginning of the coal rush in 2001 when there were more than 150 proposed coal plants announced, 111 proposed new coal plants have been defeated or abandoned, keeping over 450 million tons of carbon dioxide out of the air each year. Tens of thousands of concerned citizens across the country have joined the beyond coal movement, helping bring about tangible change in the way America is powered.

"2009 has been a remarkable year in our fight for clean energy," said Bruce Nilles, Director of the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign. "Although there are still about 90 remaining proposals, the landscape has shifted 180-degrees. Communities across America have become aware about the danger of coal and have organized to stop these projects from moving forward. The public is rising up, demanding cleaner energy, and developers and investors are taking note. There is a shift going on across America as companies realign away from old dirty practices involving coal and toward cleaner energy options, including wind, solar and becoming more efficient."

In 2009 several companies also announced plans to start transitioning away from existing coal plants, many of which are decades old. Progress Energy announced plans to close several coal plants in North Carolina, and the Tennessee Valley Authority is considering phasing out parts of its fleet of plants in Tennessee and Alabama.

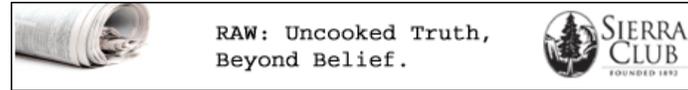
Verena Owen, Volunteer Leader of the Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign concluded, "the grassroots movement to push our country beyond coal continues to gain momentum—whether it is pushing for cleaner energy; no new coal plants; beginning the transition away from the oldest coal plants; working to improve mining practices; or fighting to clean up toxic coal ash; people across the country are fired up about a clean energy future and are refusing to let coal block the way."

The Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign is a nationwide campaign working to ensure coal is mined responsibly, burned cleanly, and disposed of safely. The campaign is working to lessen America's dependence on coal and accelerate the transition to clean

energy alternatives like wind and solar.

Visit www.sierraclub.org/coal/coalnearyou to view our coal plant tracker, which shows a full list of proposed coal plants defeated, abandoned and still proposed.

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