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Warren Buffett's PacifiCorp in Federal Court for Air Pollution Violations

PORTLAND—Corporate owners of one of the largest and most polluting coal plants in the nation, Colstrip Generating Facility located in Montana, landed in federal court today for what the Sierra Club and the Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC) call egregious violations of the federal Clean Air Act. The complaint contains an astounding 39 claims of Clean Air Act violations.

The owners facing federal violations include high-profile companies like Warren Buffett's PacifiCorp, Washington-based Puget Sound Energy (PSE), Pennsylvania Power and Light (PPL), Avista Utilities, Portland General Electric, and NorthWestern Energy.

Bruce Nilles, national director of Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign issued the following statement in response:

"Across America utilities are transitioning from coal to clean energy, yet the Colstrip owners shovel customers' money into a Montana coal plant that is one of the largest polluters in the U.S. The Colstrip coal plant is a liability not just for the owners and their boards, but also for the families who will be asked to foot the bill to keep a dying plant on life support.

Of great concern is PacifiCorp's continued involvement in illegal practices that intentionally deceive its customers about its coal plant operations. While other parts of the Warren Buffett empire like Mid-American have demonstrated real commitment to clean energy investment and responsible coal plant retirements, PacifiCorp continues to hold nearly 80% of its energy portfolio in dirty coal and has made little effort to transition to renewable energy like wind and solar.

Today's legal action is the latest in our nationwide campaign targeting owners of the nation's aging coal fleet who continue to skirt their legal obligations. It's our national priority at the Sierra Club to uphold the health and environmental safeguards promised by the Clean Air Act for more than three decades. When coal-owning utilities can no longer dump their pollution on unsuspecting customers for free, they realize sticking with coal is a gamble they can't afford to risk."

Background: Today's lawsuit comes on the heels of an unprecedented decision made by the Oregon Public Utilities Commission in a December ruling that Pacific Power, a subsidiary of PacifiCorp, must repay \$17 million to Oregon ratepayers for improperly investing customers' money in aging coal plants. The utility had falsely claimed that the expensive investment was the only course of action, despite findings that the company had less costly alternatives.