



December 1, 2011

Chicago City Council
121 N LaSalle Street
Chicago City Hall
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Alderman:

As one of the thirty-five aldermen co-sponsoring the Clean Power Ordinance, your leadership has been critical in moving the City of Chicago closer to clean air. Thank you for your concern about the pollution from Midwest Generation's old dirty coal plants in Chicago. As a result of your efforts at the city level, the problems presented by Fisk and Crawford have gained attention across Illinois. We want to take this opportunity to update you on key developments regarding the ordinance.

As you know, Aldermen Joe Moore and Danny Solis reintroduced the ordinance in late July. Mayor Emanuel indicated he strongly supports efforts to drastically reduce the pollution from the aging coal plants and the health problems they cause. His office convened a series of meetings among his staff, Midwest Generation, and the Chicago Clean Power Coalition regarding the plants. In the course of those discussions, the parties reached a tentative agreement to retire the plants and work toward the passage of state legislation requiring the Illinois Power Authority to purchase output from Midwest Generation's wind-powered facility. As pointed out by Crain's Chicago Business on November 9, 2011, "[t]he deal with the mayor would have closed Fisk in 2012 and Crawford in 2014." Unfortunately, consensus was not reached in Springfield about the terms of this agreement, no legislation has been passed to address this important issue, and as a result, the parties are still engaged in good-faith discussions.

Your sponsorship of the Chicago Clean Power Ordinance, nevertheless, continues to be critical for several reasons. First, new air quality modeling shows that the sulfur dioxide pollution from Fisk and Crawford in the Pilsen and Little Village communities violates federal standards. As shown in the attached maps, pollution from Midwest Generation's plants causes all of the areas outlined in red and yellow to violate EPA's one hour standards for sulfur dioxide. Second, last week U.S. EPA declared that Pilsen violates the national air quality standard for lead, in part due to lead pollution from the coal plants. These recent disclosures about the high pollution levels in these communities underscore the importance of addressing the pollution from Chicago's coal plants as soon as possible.

Chicago residents want this pollution cleaned up. Recent polling results, as discussed in the attached October 18, 2011 commentary by Greg Hinz in Crain's, show that 72 percent of Chicago voters support a plan to require coal power plants in the city to reduce deadly particulate pollution by 90 percent, and global warming pollution by 50 percent. Chicagoans are, accordingly, calling on their aldermen to take action on the Fisk and Crawford pollution problem.

Finally, as noted in the attached Time Magazine article, Chicago is the only major city in the nation that has two old, dirty coal plants within its city limits. That is not a distinction we should be proud of. Instead, let's have the distinction of being the city that cleaned up the power plants within city limits and protected the air and health of its residents. Thank you for demanding clean air for your constituents and for your active support of the Chicago Clean Power Ordinance. Because of your actions, we are closer than ever to a solution that works for the health of Chicagoans.

Sincerely,

SEIU Doctor's Council
Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago
Chicago Physicians for Social Responsibility

Enclosures: Letter and attachments have been hand-delivered to aldermanic mail boxes at City Hall. Attachments also can be viewed by visiting www.cleanpowerchicago.org