



**American Lung Association of the Central States
Regarding Additional Coal-Fired Power Plants for Holcomb, KS
And House Bill 2711 and Senate Bill 515
2-5-08**

The mission of the American Lung Association is to protect lung health and prevent lung disease. We focus on clean air issues because they are essential to protecting lung health.

We stand in opposition to Senate Bill 2711 and House Bill 515 because they will compromise the health of the citizens of Kansas. With health in mind, we also are specifically still in opposition to the two new power plants being proposed for Holcomb, Kansas. New coal-fired power plants will only add to the serious challenge our nation is facing with over half of our population breathing unhealthy air. We do not need more challenges to our health and our air quality, locally, regionally, or nationally.

The American Lung Association has been actively engaged in Clean Air issues for over 40 years. Each year, we produce the State of the Air Report that grades air quality, county by county, throughout the United States. Unfortunately, the most recent report found that over half of the US population lives in counties that have unhealthy levels of either particle pollution or ozone at some time during the year. So, in other words, over half of our US population is breathing air that is harmful to their health. House Bill 2711 and Senate Bill 515 have the potential to greatly add to that problem. So would new coal-fired power plants.

When new sources of power are being considered for the region, we strongly urge decision makers to keep the health of our citizens foremost in the decision-making processes.

The American Lung Association believes that the goals of a sound energy policy and protection of respiratory health converge toward use of technologies that maximize energy efficiency and the use of clean energy sources.

In other words, we know that there are other, workable and cleaner energy choices in lieu of additional coal-fired power plants. Arguments for coal power generation that focus only on the “cheap” cost of coal ignore the true costs when the health of citizens is not factored in the equation.

Air pollution has many serious health impacts. From the lung health perspective, we are very concerned about two, particulate matter pollution and ozone

pollution. This plant will produce significant particulate matter emissions and other emissions like Nitrogen Oxide, Sulfur Dioxide and Volatile Organic Compounds that mix to form ozone.

Particulate matter's health impacts are many and serious:

Short-term increases in particle pollution (over just hours or days) have been linked to:

- death from respiratory and cardiovascular causes, including strokes
- increased numbers of heart attacks, especially among the elderly and in people with heart conditions;
- inflammation of lung tissue in young, healthy adults;
- increased hospitalization for cardiovascular disease, including strokes;
- increased emergency room visits for patients suffering from acute respiratory ailments;
- increased hospitalization for asthma among children; and
- increased severity of asthma attacks in children.

Year-round exposure to particle pollution has been linked to:

- slowed lung function growth in children and teenagers;
- significant damage to the small airways of the lungs;
- increased risk of dying from lung cancer; and
- increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease.

Anyone may be affected by particle pollution, but several groups are most at risk:

- Children under 18
- Adults 65 and older
- Anyone with chronic lung diseases, such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, or emphysema
- Anyone with a cardiovascular disease, such as a coronary artery disease or who has suffered a stroke or heart attack
- Anyone with diabetes

How serious is the impact?

Here's one study that shows it's a life or death issue to many. EPA scientists did a study in 9 cities. These 9 cities were not meeting the current fine particulate matter standards but even if they were the EPA estimated that over **4,700 premature deaths would occur each year from fine particulate matter in just those nine cities** (Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Boston, Phoenix, Seattle, and San Jose). The EPA has not calculated the total but extrapolating that data would mean the death toll is easily in the tens of thousands annually.

We are very concerned about the amount of fine particulate matter that will be produced by this plant and its impact on the health of citizens in this region including premature death.

In regard to ozone, many areas in the United States produce enough ground-level ozone during the summer months to cause health problems that impact everyone and most dramatically impact the young, senior citizens and those with lung disease. Emissions from the Holcomb plant include Nitrogen Oxide, Sulfur Dioxide and Volatile Organic Compounds that mix to form ozone particularly during the summer months. This concern about ozone is intensified with the summer months also being the peak load times of electric generation plants.

Ozone has many negative health impacts. The immediate problems are:

- shortness of breath
- chest pain when inhaling deeply
- wheezing and coughing
- increased susceptibility to respiratory infections

Exposure to ozone also increases:

- risk of premature death;
- pulmonary inflammation;
- the risk of asthma attacks;
- the need for people with lung diseases, such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), to receive medical treatment and be hospitalized.

Two studies published in 2005 explored ozone's ability to reduce the lung's ability to work efficiently, a term called "lung function." Each study looked at otherwise healthy groups who were exposed to ozone for long periods: outdoor postal workers in Taiwan and college freshmen who were lifelong residents of Los Angeles or the San Francisco Bay area. Both studies found that the long exposure to elevated ozone levels had decreased their lung function.

Short-term exposure to ozone also has been linked to aggravation of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Repeated inflammation due to exposure to ozone over a period of years can lead to a chronic "stiffening" of the lungs.

Ozone pollution also has grave and wide health impacts. Many groups are at risk; Children, senior citizens, people who work or exercise outdoors, people with preexisting respiratory disease (e.g., asthma or COPD) and "responders" who are otherwise healthy but have an enhanced reaction to ozone.

When you look at that list of who is impacted by particulate matter or ozone, it includes almost everyone! And the impacts need to be taken seriously. They are serious health issues.

The American Lung Association of the Central States respectfully requests that decision-makers keep the health of our region's citizens in mind as they make sound and informed decisions about how we get our energy. This includes decisions about the specific legislation being discussed, as well as the potential for two new power plants in Holcomb.

Submitted by Susannah Fuchs, Director of Environmental Health for The American Lung Association of the Central States.

Note: All citations refer to the American Lung Association State of the Air Report and can be provided.

Kansas area American Lung Association contact person:

Phil Hanson, Senior Vice President of American Lung Association of Central States, 816-842-5242, ext 1101

Other American Lung Association contacts:

Michelle Bernth, Senior Vice President of American Lung Association of the Central States, 314-645-5505, ext 1001

Susannah Fuchs, Director of Environmental Health for American Lung Association of the Central States, 314-645-5505 ext 1007