

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 22, 2014

**CONTACT:**

Ruby Shirazi, [Rabia.Shirazi@sierraclub.org](mailto:Rabia.Shirazi@sierraclub.org), [201-562-8560](tel:201-562-8560)

Andy Knott, [Andy.Knott@sierraclub.org](mailto:Andy.Knott@sierraclub.org), [314-803-4695](tel:314-803-4695)

## **Cleaner air coming to Independence as City Council sets date to close two coal-fired plants**

*City Council approves resolution to end coal-fired  
energy production at two city-owned plants by January 2016*

**INDEPENDENCE, MO** – The Independence City Council Monday passed a proposed [resolution](#) directing the end of coal use at two power plants owned and operated by the municipally-owned utility Independence Power and Light (IPL). The resolution also requires city staff to conduct feasibility studies for renewable energy on city buildings and for expanding clean energy incentives for IPL customers.

The resolution, introduced by Council Member Scott Roberson, is the first formal action taken by the Independence City Council on IPL's future energy plans following extensive community discussion and debate on the issue.

The two plants set for closure, Missouri City and Blue Valley, are two of the oldest coal-fired plants in the region. Missouri City was constructed in 1954 and is the oldest coal plant in Missouri. Blue Valley was built in 1958, expanded in 1965, and is the fourth oldest plant in Missouri. The plants burn high-sulfur coal from the Illinois Basin region.

The resolution directs the City Manager to ensure the plants stop burning coal by January 2016. The Missouri City plant will end energy production altogether and be retired. Blue Valley will switch to burning natural gas, a fuel the plant was initially designed to burn, for the limited hours the plant operates each year. The resolution also sets a goal for Independence to triple its reliance on clean energy, calling for IPL to source 10 percent of its electricity supplied from renewable sources by 2018, and increases that goal to 15 percent by 2021.

The Independence closures represent the 169th and 170th coal plants to retire or announce retirement since 2010, cutting nearly 252 million tons of carbon emissions, the equivalent of 53 million passenger vehicles. Emissions from both plants in 2013 alone totaled 52,891 metric tons.

What this means for Missouri is 20 deaths avoided, 30 heart attacks avoided, 350 asthma attacks avoided, and \$9.5 million in healthcare costs savings. The closures will also protect local waterways, which have been receiving coal ash waste from the plants for half a century

"This is a turning point for Independence," said **Roger Hershey**, a leader of Indy Energy, a community group that has promoted energy options for the city. "Independence will benefit for generations to come from this decision to move away from coal and towards a brighter clean energy future."

In a related effort earlier this year to urge IPL to retire the two coal plants and increase investments in clean energy, Indy Energy hosted two community energy forums that attracted 150 attendees. And in May, Independence residents and Sierra Club members delivered more than 250 postcard petitions to the City Council.

"We applaud the Independence City Council for this landmark decision," said **Andy Knott**, Missouri Beyond Coal Campaign Representative for the Sierra Club. "Implementing this roadmap to build a local clean energy economy positions Independence to become a leader among electric utilities in Missouri."

The passed resolution also promotes greater use of renewable energy. Specifically, the City Council declared its goal to have 10 percent of IPL's electricity supplied from renewable sources by 2018, and increases that goal to 15 percent by 2021. These goals mirror the Renewable Energy Standard in Missouri for investor-owned utilities.

"This decision will make it easier for children, the elderly and asthmatics to breath," said **Roman Davis Sr.**, an Independence resident involved in the issue. "On behalf of all Independence residents, I thank the City Council for voting in favor of our community's public health."

Currently, IPL provides 5 percent of its electricity from renewable sources, primarily through a 150 MW wind purchase contract with the Smoky Hills wind farm in Kansas.

###