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Press Release

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Proposed Power Lines Bring Dirty Coal to New Jersey

Dirty coal energy and increased air pollution from stripped mountains and power plants in West Virginia and Ohio will be brought through New Jersey despite Governor Corzine's Commitment to Reduce Carbon Emissions and Combat Global Warming

The New Jersey Highlands Coalition and leading environmental organizations in New Jersey expressed dismay today when they discovered that the proposed PSE&G power line project through northern New Jersey would circumvent the efforts of New Jersey as a leader in combating global warming. The proposed project would bring unneeded and unwelcome dirty coal energy from West Virginia and Pennsylvania through pristine areas of the New Jersey Highlands and Skylands Region ending in Roseland. Known as the National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor (NIETC), the proposed power lines will bring dirty coal energy, produced in other states, into and across New Jersey and New York.

The project flies in the face of sound energy policy and is directly contradictory to the mandates of the 2007 Global Warming Response Act. The Act was signed by Governor Corzine on the eve of the Live Earth concert series. New Jersey's Governor has also shown his leadership in combating global warming by voluntarily joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) which promoted a carbon cap and trade system, as well as in the Draft 2008 Energy Master Plan which shifts New Jersey's reliance on coal power to cleaner technology.

Julia Somers, Executive Director of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition, explained "Bringing dirty coal in to New Jersey instead of providing clean, reliable power by expanding our state's reliance on alternative energy is the wrong direction for New Jersey. It makes Governor Corzine's commitment as a leader in combating global warming look like nothing more than a shell game."

Powers afforded under the 2005 Federal Energy Policy Act grant the Department of Energy the ability to site power line corridor designations after consulting the affected states and after providing meaningful alternatives to constructing such new transmission lines. If deemed necessary, utility companies are granted the authority to seize private property through eminent domain to construct the power line corridors.

Many environmental groups in New Jersey and regionally have objected to the corridor designation including the New Jersey Highlands Coalition, Environment New Jersey and the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. These groups have noted that the 2006 Congestion Study conducted by the Department of Energy projecting a

shortfall in new power supplies in the eastern Mid-Atlantic region is flawed and that market behaviors in 2007 and 2008 have differed greatly from forecasts being used to justify the need for new transmission lines. In fact, in October of 2007, power conglomerate PJM noted that *total supply growth exceeded demand growth*, meaning that the supply of power was growing faster than the demand for power. This differs greatly from the DOE's 2006 justification for the transmission corridor designation.

“Pursuing new power lines just to subsidize environmentally harmful power generation is exactly the wrong public policy,” **said Jon Meade, director of the four-state Highlands Coalition.** “Instead of looking forward to a new model of energy for the northeastern states, this would drag us backwards.”

Steps toward energy efficiency have helped usher in a new era of energy consumption by which consumers are far more mindful of their energy usages, effectively reducing demand for energy. Efforts like the 2007 Global Warming Response Act, signed by Governor Corzine, only further illustrate New Jersey's commitment to being a nationwide leader on combating global warming, increasing energy efficiency and phasing out our dependence on dirty coal power. The proposed power lines through northern New Jersey would undercut New Jersey's ability to combat global warming by opening up new markets in the northeast to sell dirty coal energy produced in West Virginia and Ohio, where commitments to combat global warming have not been made. Additionally, New Jersey would (and already does) feel the effects of the Ohio Valley's lax environmental standards through the eastward movement of power plant air emissions, which in turn greatly add to this state's habitually poor air quality. Increased coal production in the west would significantly increase air toxins in New Jersey, resulting in everything from augmented health problems to acid rain and mercury pollution.

Not only would the proposed transmission lines undercut New Jersey's statutory commitments and ultimately decrease air purity, it would directly impact landowners whose property could be seized through eminent domain and whose property values could be greatly diminished by the new towers. Poles to handle these lines would be between 120 and 150 feet tall, towering over the surrounding landscape, altering community character, fragmenting habitat with wildlife, and disrupting scenic viewsheds and recreational opportunities. Further, there is significant potential for power companies to target preserved lands.

Since the Department of Energy failed to consult the affected states before designating all of New Jersey as a critical congestion area, and failed to provide the mandated alternatives for constructing new transmission lines, the New Jersey Highlands Coalition is calling on our legislative leaders in Washington D.C. to end the proposed corridor designation until these two legal requirements are met. Senator Menendez and Senator Casey (PA) have supported holding hearings to find a better solution, but the Department of Energy has been unwilling to engage on the issue. Alternatives should include locally produced energy that is consistent with all New Jersey statutes including the 2007 Global Warming Response Act, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and the Draft 2008 Energy Master Plan.

For more information on the Global Warming Response Act, please see Governor Corzine's Press Release <http://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/approved/20070706.html>

For more information on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, visit their website <http://www.rggi.org/>

To access New Jersey's Draft 2008 Energy Master Plan, visit this link <http://www.state.nj.us/emp/>

To find more information about the corridor designation and for pictures, visit <http://www.whosedominion.com>

The New Jersey Highlands Coalition is made up of a diverse and effective group of organizations and individuals — small and large, local, regional, statewide and national — all working together to protect, enhance and restore the New Jersey Highlands

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