

Press Release on MAPLE

For Immediate Release

March 31, 2011

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Groups Branch Out to Form Clean Energy Coalition

Today the Multi-state Alliance to Promote Clean Energy (MAPLE) announced its official formation. The coalition of environmental and citizen action groups has formed at a time when New Jersey and Pennsylvania are making decisions about the future of fossil fuels use. MAPLE's goal is clear and simple: move both states toward a clean energy future.

"As neighboring states, New Jersey and Pennsylvania have a close relationship. How we use energy and where we get it affects us all. If it's dirty in one state, it's polluting both states. We must work together to support clean energy so we can all breathe clean air and drink safe water," said Christine Guhl, Sierra Club Field Organizer.

The MAPLE Coalition is a unified group of citizens and organizations from both sides of the Delaware River, including Clean Air Council, Greenpeace, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Save the Park, the Sierra Club, Stop the Lines, and the New Jersey Highlands Coalition. MAPLE is working to stop the controversial Susquehanna-Roseland transmission lines, prevent natural gas "fracking" in the region, and shut-down the Gen-On coal plant in Portland, PA.

As part of the Coalition launch, on April 9th MAPLE will sponsor a hike to the top of Mt. Minsi in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area where hikers can see the proposed power line location and the Portland smokestack.

"It is only by walking or canoeing through the park that we see the sensitive habitats that the towers would destroy. The proposed power lines are unnecessary. Their presence on these ancient lands, sacred to the Lenape, must never occur," said Anna Maria Caldara, Save the Park.

The Gen-On coal plant is under scrutiny by the Environmental Protection Agency and is currently the subject of a lawsuit. The state of New Jersey is suing the owner of the plant because the emissions affect the air quality in Warren County, NJ. The EPA will be holding a public hearing on possible measures to reduce air pollution from the plant on April 27, 2011.

"Gen-On's profits are earned at the expense of our health. Do the children of our area deserve that?" Caldara said.

Both Stop the Lines and Save the Park were organizations formed to fight the Susquehanna-Roseland power line project. Both groups were concerned with effects that the project would have on the community and the Park. Now the groups are working together to help move Pennsylvania and New Jersey away from coal.

“Now is not the time to increase the use of coal-fired energy in New Jersey or Pennsylvania. There are much better alternatives for our current and future energy needs,” said Dave Slaperud, Stop the Lines.

“The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is facing fossil fuel attacks on our pristine land, water, air and wildlife habitat. It is time to say NO MORE and stand up for our parks, forests, rivers, and the future of our children,” said Laura Dempsey, Save the Park.

"The historic, scenic, ecological and recreational resources of the Delaware River and Water Gap combine into an exceptional treasure that must not be sacrificed for the sake of the coal industry's profits. What do we receive in return? Only fouled air and water," said Elliott Ruga, NJ Highlands Coalition.

Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, asserted, “When local, state and federal governments are being pressured to create jobs, jobs, jobs, the River and environment are often undervalued and their value as a job creator and economic engine vital for the region gets downplayed and forgotten as the special interests fight for their pet projects. Protecting and restoring the Delaware River is fundamental to healthy jobs, economies, and communities in our region, and if sacrificed to achieve short term political or industrial ends, will result in the undermining of the health, enjoyment, and economic vitality of our region’s children, families, and communities.”

For more information on the MAPLE Coalition’s April 9th hike please contact Christine Guhl at christine.guhl@sierraclub.org or visit the New Jersey Sierra Club Facebook Page.