



For Immediate Release, October 25, 2018

Contact: Perrin de Jong, (828) 595-1862, perrin@biologicaldiversity.org
Robert Ukeiley, (720) 496-8568, rukeiley@biologicaldiversity.org

Study: University of North Carolina Coal Plant Spews Asthma-causing Pollution
Citizens Resist Renewal of State Permit Allowing Deadly Coal Pollution

CHAPEL HILL, N.C.— An [analysis](#) released today by the Center for Biological Diversity reveals the permit for the University of North Carolina’s coal-fired power plant allows dangerous toxic emissions that far exceed Clean Air Act limits.

The new study comes as students, residents and activists are urging the North Carolina Division of Air Quality to shut down the outdated, coal-fired plant.

The Center’s [analysis](#) discovered that the coal plant’s permit allows it to emit four to six times the limits of dangerous nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide pollution found to be safe under the Clean Air Act. The models indicate that nearly the entire campus, including outdoor athletic facilities, and multiple residential neighborhoods in Chapel Hill, are at risk from the toxins.

“UNC’s flagship university owes it to students, employees and the people of Chapel Hill to ensure it doesn’t threaten public health with its dirty, outdated coal plant,” said Perrin de Jong, an Asheville-based staff attorney for the Center. “UNC’s obstinate refusal to move on from burning coal means that students, staff and faculty can face air pollution at levels that can trigger dangerous asthma attacks, inflame lung diseases and even kill people.”

The Center’s analysis comes as the North Carolina Division of Air Quality is considering re-approving the coal plant’s permit. The public comment period on the permit renewal ends today.

UNC-Chapel Hill operates the last coal-fired power plant at a college or university in the state of North Carolina. In 2010, former Chancellor Holden Thorpe committed UNC to shutting down the plant and abandoning the use of coal by 2020. In 2017, after a change in administration, UNC reneged on its commitment and announced that it would not close its coal-burning power plant.

“I grew up in Chapel Hill with life-threatening asthma that landed me in the emergency room so many times I lost count,” said de Jong. “But I never imagined that UNC’s coal plant might have been the reason why playing outside so often left me hacking, wheezing and gasping for air. The state should shutter this dirty plant to make sure Chapel Hill’s kids no longer have to breathe this filthy, unhealthy air.”

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

Alaska · Arizona · California · Florida · Minnesota · Nevada · New Mexico · New York · Oregon · Vermont · Washington, DC
P.O. Box 710 · Tucson, AZ 85702-0710 tel: (520) 623.5252 fax: (520) 623.9797 www.BiologicalDiversity.org

[More press releases](#)