

**Statement of Senator Patrick Leahy
on Final Cross-State Air Pollution Rule Issued by EPA
Reducing the Interstate Transport of Fine Particulate Matter and Ozone
July 7, 2011**

Today, the Environmental Protection Agency took steps to make the air in Vermont cleaner by issuing the Final Cross-State Air Pollution Rule.

In Vermont, we pride ourselves on our bucolic views, unspoiled waterways, and our connection to the land. Yet, all of this is threatened by pollution that is beyond our control, and coming from beyond our borders. Vermont has always been a dumping ground, so to speak, for emissions from coal-fired power plants from other states. Toxic pollution, generated in other parts of the country, blows into Vermont and damages our state's scenic beauty, decreases the value of conservation investments, and damages our forests, lakes, rivers, and wetlands.

These power plant emissions and air pollution are transported long distances and not only mar our landscapes and threaten our health, but also cost downwind states and businesses billions of dollars annually. Our only defense against such activity is the federal Clean Air Act. Today, with the implementation of the EPA's Cross-State Air Pollution Rule, power plants will be required to install new pollution controls that reduce the amount of dangerous emissions crossing state lines and entering Vermont. This will level the playing field by requiring power plants to make long overdue investments in proven, readily available pollution control technologies that are already in place at many power plants.

The Cross-State Air Pollution Rule requires many fossil fuel-fired power plants to slash emissions that cross state lines and contribute to ground-level ozone and fine particle pollution in other states. These pollutants contribute to smog and air pollution which causes tens of thousands of Americans to become sick each year. Those most susceptible to illnesses related to poor air quality are often our most vulnerable citizens. The elderly and children, especially those already suffering from respiratory disorders like asthma, are routinely forced to stay inside on poor air quality days.

Pollution is also responsible for thousands of new respiratory illnesses each year, adding more unnecessary costs to our health care system. In fact, the reductions contained in this rule would prevent 14,000 to 36,000 premature deaths each year, 23,000 nonfatal heart attacks, 21,000 cases of acute bronchitis, 240,000 cases of aggravated asthma, and 1.9 million missed school and work days. The total benefits of this rule are estimated to be \$120 - 290 billion.

Some believe these benefits are not worth the costs to industry. However, the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule is projected to cost industry from \$10 - 30 billion, a very modest amount compared to the financial benefits and deaths prevented by this Rule. In addition, a utility-funded report recently contradicted arguments that the Rule will threaten U.S. electricity reliability. The reason for this is that a majority of utilities have already taken steps to adapt to federal rules. In fact, over half of the country's coal-fired power plants have already installed sulfur dioxide scrubbers or plan to install them. Of those that had plans to retire units, they are

doing so because they are inefficient and cannot compete in today's market, not because of these rules.

In the end, only about one-fourth of the nation's power plants need to take action. Are we going to let these plants, which have dragged their feet, refusing to install new technology that would prevent pollution and prevent deaths and serious illness, continue to poison our air on the public's dime?

No, instead we should encourage the use of cleaner technologies that will lead to healthier air, increased efficiency, and a boost in jobs. Overall, regulations under the Clean Air Act have dramatically reduced air pollution while creating jobs and spurring American innovation in new industries and technology. Reports show the creation of 1.5 million jobs over the next five years and increased global exports of domestically-produced clean technologies. History has demonstrated that since 1970, every dollar spent on compliance with the Clean Air Act has led to \$4 - \$8 in economic benefits. By 2020, the total benefits of the Clean Air Act will reach \$2 trillion!

Coming from a state with no coal-fired power plants that has been on the receiving end of these pollutants for far too long, I fully welcome the final Cross-State Air Pollution Rule because I know that it will improve the quality of life for Vermonters who are subject to the impacts, and costs, of pollution from far beyond our borders. This Rule is good for Vermont. It is good for the country. The Clean Air Act has been cleaning our air for over 4 decades, while continuing to grow our economy. The final Cross-State Air Pollution Rule that was published today will encourage innovation and cost-savings and help power plants achieve their mission of providing clean, affordable, and reliable energy. I am happy to see the EPA use this tool, given to it by Congress, to protect the people and the environment of Vermont and the rest of the country from pollution generated by distant industries.

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