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PRESS STATEMENT ON ACHD ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST U.S. STEEL'S CLAIRTON, IRVIN AND EDGAR THOMPSON PLANTS

Two weeks after announcing their intent to sue U.S. Steel's Clairton, Irvin, and Edgar Thompson plants for violating the federal Clean Air Act, PennEnvironment and Clean Air Council today released the following statement in response to the announcement by the Allegheny County Health Department that it has issued an administrative enforcement order regarding U.S. Steel's ongoing failure to operate its desulfurization plant following a December 24 fire at the Clairton Coke Works.

"Few issues are more paramount for Pittsburgh area residents than clean air, and the Clairton Coke Works has a long history of contributing to degraded air quality in the region," said Ashleigh Deemer, PennEnvironment's Western Pennsylvania Director. "We hope to work cooperatively with the Health Department to uphold vital limits on air pollution and create a disincentive for any company to let such a situation -- operating a plant without a functioning pollution control system -- happen again."

"We are glad to see the Health Department take this step," said Christopher Ahlers, Staff Attorney at the Clean Air Council. "We all have the same goals: ensuring that pollution controls are restored, minimizing harmful emissions, and promoting healthy air in the community. We want to ensure a complete, speedy, and just resolution of this public health problem."

The groups currently anticipate that they will move forward with filing a lawsuit at the conclusion of the mandatory 60-day notice period. They believe that enforcement efforts by citizen groups and the County, working together, are likely to obtain the speediest and most complete remedy for this situation.