

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sierra Club: Proposed ethane cracker would threaten communities with toxic air pollution

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Columbus, OH -- The Sierra Club and partner organizations [filed an appeal today](#) challenging a key permit for a massive proposed petrochemical facility known as an “ethane cracker” in Belmont County. The plant is part of the industry’s push to steeply increase U.S. plastic production.

Ignoring testimony from dozens of concerned citizens at public hearings on the plant, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency issued PTT Global Chemical America (PTTG) an air permit for the project in late December. The appeal, filed today by the Sierra Club, Earthworks, Center for Biological Diversity, and Freshwater Accountability Project before the Environmental Review Appeals Commission, argues that the State of Ohio grossly underestimated the amount of pollution to be emitted from the plant and should have required more effective technology to reduce those emissions.

The proposed facility is one of five proposed petrochemical plants in the Ohio Valley that would use byproducts from fracked gas to make plastic. Along with a large network of proposed fracked gas pipelines along the Ohio River, the plants would make up the nation’s second largest petrochemical hub. The largest is located in southern Louisiana along the Mississippi River, in an area known as “Cancer Alley” because of the high rates of illness among nearby communities. Ethane crackers are [known](#) to release toxic air pollution including cancer-causing benzene and other pollutants.

“Communities shouldn’t be forced to breathe toxic, polluted air just to prop up fracked gas and petrochemical companies,” said **Sierra Club Beyond Dirty Fuels Campaign Director Kelly Martin**. “This plant, and the broader effort to build out a petrochemical hub in this area, would be a danger to clean air, public health, and our climate. The health and safety of Ohioans and those who live downstream on the Ohio River are worth more than fossil fuel industry profits.”

“The Ohio EPA’s rubber stamp of the cracker plant air permit shows a total disregard for expert input and concerns of the local residents,” said **Lea Harper, Managing Director of Freshwater Accountability Project**. “We are dismayed that there is not more regulatory oversight of such a toxic pollutant in the Ohio River Valley.”

“These plants will contaminate Ohio River Valley communities just to create more plastic pollution,” said **Lauren Packard, Staff Attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity**. “We need to keep fossil fuels in the ground instead finding wasteful new uses for them. Industry’s plans to increase plastic production will worsen climate change and the ocean plastic crisis at the expense of Ohioans.”

“Ohio EPA knows PTTGCA’s Petrochemical Complex will pollute the air and harm the health of Ohio’s communities. Yet they permitted it anyway,” said **Leann Leiter, PA/OH Field Advocate with Earthworks**. “Today’s appeal is a step toward correcting Ohio EPA’s flawed decision. Communities living near this cracker plant, and all its connecting infrastructure, deserve the full protection of the law.”

About the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3 million members and supporters. In addition to helping people from all backgrounds explore nature and our outdoor heritage, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit www.sierraclub.org.

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