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### **Breathe Project's Statement About US Steel's Announcement to Cancel Planned Investments at the Mon Valley Works**

U.S. Steel disclosed in its 2021 first quarter call that it has cancelled its promised \$1.5 billion investment in the Mon Valley Works, originally promised in May of 2019 to much fanfare in its "Best of Both" strategy.

This latest announcement continues U.S. Steel's pattern of broken promises to residents of the Mon Valley while highlighting its recent purchase of Big River Steel's electric arc furnace facility in Arkansas, a non-union shop.

The Mon Valley has endured a long history of broken promises, followed by abandonment, that has burdened communities for generations. This announcement is just the latest episode. Instead of embracing innovation, investing in the Mon Valley and improving quality of life while securing employment, the latest announcement follows a pernicious cycle that leads to abandoning Mon Valley workers, communities and residents.

The announcement also cynically uses the excuse of reducing the company's carbon footprint for the announcement.

The idling of Clairton Coke Works batteries 1, 2 and 3 will likely result in reduced emissions in 1 ½ years time. In the meantime, U.S. Steel has been idling batteries in response to economic slowdown conditions, yet bad air episodes have continued in spite of this situation, which means the company emits high levels of pollution across other coke batteries and plants as part of the Mon Valley Works.

Ongoing lawsuits, investigations and violations with the operations of the Clairton Coke Works and the Edgar Thomson Works reflect that these plants need more investment to stop harming Allegheny County residents beyond shutting down just a portion of the Coke Works.

"While the permanent idling of those three dirtiest batteries will be beneficial for air quality in the Mon Valley, waiting for another 1 1/2 years for that to happen will continue to add pollution in the Mon Valley and Allegheny County," said Rachel Filippini, executive director of GASP.

As of April 29, 2021, Allegheny County has experienced exceedingly poor air quality on 18 days since the start of spring, March 21, 2021, and was ranked in the top-10 worst rankings in the U.S. for some period of the day on the EPA's [Airnow.gov](https://www.airnow.gov) site. The county has also ranked #1 worst in the U.S. 9 times; the AQI

reached Code Orange and Red considered an “unhealthy” range” and as high as 170 at the Liberty monitor.

“As we approach the second anniversary of the U.S. Steel announcement of the now cancelled \$1.5 billion investment in the Mon Valley Works, it is worth remembering who was there to lead the 2019 celebration, Allegheny County Executive, Rich Fitzgerald, the CEO of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and the leadership and membership of the United Steelworkers,” said Howard Rieger of East End Neighbors, co-organizer of a resident-led effort to raise awareness of the air quality experience of residents in Allegheny County. “Now that U.S. Steel has chosen to invest those funds to buy a non-union mill in Arkansas, it would be nice to know how that group feels about the company’s latest broken promise?”

"U.S Steel's announcement is its latest broken promise," said PennFuture President and CEO Jacquelyn Bonomo. "Is there no end to the disappointment Mon Valley residents and workers must endure at the hands of U.S. Steel's falsehoods? These investments would have been a game changer for the Mon Valley Works, but now they will not materialize as the company conveniently characterizes this as a business decision. Will the disillusionment of residents in these communities be felt in the same manner by those elected officials and other champions who heralded U.S. Steel's announcement in May 2019? U.S. Steel is a toxic neighbor to these communities, and with this deflating announcement stands to poison its human relationships in the same manner it poisons our air. Each and every resident in the Mon Valley deserves better than this, as does anyone who cherishes clean air in the region.

U.S. Steel must stop ongoing pollution issues in the Mon Valley and the Pittsburgh region that cause harm to the community and that ensures a healthy, viable economic future for Mon Valley residents, workers, and communities.

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