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### **Breathe Project’s Assessment of U.S. Steel’s Sustainability Announcement**

Pittsburgh, Pa. – U.S. Steel released an announcement today that it will pursue a goal of carbon neutrality by the year 2050 and a 25 percent reduction of its carbon footprint by the year 2030, citing “innovation” as its core driver.

The clearest message from this announcement is how little the Mon Valley Works features in this vision of innovation. What is [featured prominently are](#) electric arc furnaces in the newly purchased Big River Steel facility in Arkansas.

Had this sustainability announcement occurred in the year 2010, there would be cause for celebration about its pioneering approach. In 2021, however, this announcement highlights how out-of-touch U.S. Steel is with credible sustainability reporting requirements. U.S. Steel’s has a history in SWPA of broken promises, making this latest announcement appear to be brand sanitizing.

U.S. Steel’s plans do not follow Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) reporting standards, which means that sustainability claims should be viewed skeptically:

- U.S. Steel has failed to involve community stakeholders in its sustainability process and [to identify material topics that community stakeholders find impactful](#). Such a process is necessary “to ensure that in determining material topics, an organization considers the full picture of its significant outward [impacts on the economy, the environment, and society – not only those impacts that have immediate consequences from a business perspective, such as financial costs or a damaged reputation](#).”
- As a result, U.S. Steel’s report reflects a dismissive orientation toward community concerns, such as ongoing, severe air pollution problems that have plagued Southwestern Pennsylvania and especially the Mon Valley.
- Additionally, U.S. Steel has engaged in past [actions of intimidation towards local community members](#) instead of listening to their concerns in order to address material topics identified by local stakeholders.
- As a result, Allegheny County is currently not meeting the federal sulfur dioxide standard. Hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S) pervades the Mon Valley and portions of the City of Pittsburgh with high concentrations of H<sub>2</sub>S too often (widely recognized by its foul, rotten-egg odor).
- This year there have already been 21 exceedances of Pennsylvania’s 24-hour average H<sub>2</sub>S standard – 13 at ACHD’s Liberty monitor and eight more at its North Braddock monitor.

U.S. Steel’s plans lack credibility because of their long history of past actions that lack follow-through. This pattern of evading accountability while continuing to degrade the health and well-being of residents in Allegheny County needs to end:

- In May of 2019, USS made a commitment to invest \$1.2 billion in its Mon Valley Works. [Rather than follow through on that promise to our region](#), USS invested that money to purchase a non-union Arkansas mini-mill.
- When asked about the situation on Oct. 31, 2020, USS CEO David Burritt stated, "[The key word in all of this is really the optionality. We can decide to put it in Mon Valley. We can decide to put it somewhere else.](#)" Mr. Burritt told analysts at the tail-end of the company's third-quarter earnings conference call. "We have a lot of flexibility to decide where this goes." Furthermore, USS can "... decide where this [money] goes and when we pull the trigger." His closing comment was, "I'm going to let you continue to wonder."
- USS recently [opposed coke oven regulations in a public comment session](#) despite these ongoing episodes of bad air that put our community at risk.
- This lack of commitment and investment continue to put the health if residents of Allegheny County at risk as well as the jobs in the Mon Valley.
- This pattern of future-promise, obfuscate and delay has existed for at least 50 years:
  - [New York Times – "U.S. Steel Signs Pollution Pact"](#)
  - [New York Times – "U.S. Steel Under Fire as a Problem Polluter"](#)
  - [New York Times – "Prospective U.S. Steel Cleanup Pact is Near Collapse"](#)

U.S. Steel must embrace GRI sustainability reporting standards in its sustainability activities; follow through with its promises; and stop ongoing pollution issues in the Mon Valley and the Pittsburgh region that cause harm to the community. It is time to ensure a healthy, viable economic future for Mon Valley residents, workers and communities.