



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Breathe Collaborative Welcomes ACHD's Enforcement Actions for Ongoing Emissions Violations at U.S. Steel's Clairton Coke Works and Mon Valley Works

The Breathe Project thanks the Allegheny Health Department for its enforcement action today, a decision grounded in its authority to protect the health of county residents and based on specific, scientific data about the ongoing emissions levels of sulfur dioxide leaving U.S. Steel's interconnected facilities since the fire on Dec. 24, 2019.

Earlier this week, the Breathe Project called on ACHD to "speak from facts, data and science" in protecting the health of county residents who have endured an ongoing pollution situation related to the Clairton Coke Works and Mon Valley Works. This request was based on the fact that residents in the Mon Valley have continually called on ACHD to put the Clairton Coke Works' old and leaking batteries into hot idle unless another solution could be found to bring the plant into compliance by not permitting the open burning of undesulfurized coking gas in flares and facilities that continue to pollute the region's air shed.

"We are pleased that the Allegheny County Health Department is taking action to curb sulfur dioxide and hydrogen sulfide pollution from US Steel's operations in the Mon Valley, and hopefully to bring the air in Mon Valley into compliance with federal and state ambient air quality standards," said John Baillie, GASP senior attorney. "We will continue to monitor the results of this latest enforcement action to make sure the required measures are sufficient to achieve compliance with those health-based standards."

It is important to note that ACHD found that U.S. Steel's plants were emitting more than 74,000 pounds of SO₂ into the atmosphere according to data collected on January 29, 2019. This amount was more than 5 and a half times above their legal maximum limit. At the Peachtree flare, U.S. Steel emitted more than 20 tons of SO₂ into the atmosphere on that day. It is highly probable that these emission levels have continued during the last two months.

“This enforcement action is a welcome and increased show of force by the Allegheny County Health Department,” said Geoff Bland, community organizer for Clean Water Action.

“Unfortunately for residents it looks as if emissions from the Coke Works have been far worse than ACHD has been letting on.”

The Breathe Project also thanks the Mon Valley and Clairton community and the Breathe Collaborative for continuing to exert the pressure needed to bring about this positive outcome.

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