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Class Action Lawsuit Filed Against U.S. Steel; Environmental Groups File Separate Lawsuit Against EPA Regarding Coke Oven Emissions

Pittsburgh, Pa., – Two separate lawsuits were filed this week that address improper pollution regulation of coke oven gas, a known carcinogen, in failing to protect communities in the Mon Valley and throughout the country.

Earthjustice on behalf of Citizens for Pennsylvania’s Future, Gasp (of Birmingham, Alabama), Louisiana Bucket Brigade and Sierra Club announced today they have sued the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for improper regulation of coke ovens resulting in carcinogenic emissions that destroy air quality and cause devastating health complications.

In a second, unrelated class action lawsuit, plaintiff Linda Hernandez and her attorneys are suing U.S. Steel on behalf of communities in the Mon Valley stemming from the “catastrophic fire” that broke out on Dec. 24, 2019 and disabled the desulfurization system that is used to remove sulfurous byproducts from the gases emitted to the air. The “unprecedented quantities” of sulfur dioxide triggered repeated “high health alerts and widespread health issues”, including offensive odor, burning eyes, nose and throat and respiratory distress for more than three months.

“These lawsuits are symptomatic of years of neglect and evasion on the part of U.S. Steel and regulators in failing to perform diligence and consider the health of residents of Southwestern Pennsylvania, especially residents in the Mon Valley,” said Matthew Mehalik, executive director of the Breathe Project. “A more sustainable and health-oriented course of economic development in our region, especially the Mon Valley, involves addressing the shortcomings of serial polluters and making choices that avoid the problems that result in these sorts of lawsuits.”

A copy of the class-action suit is attached. The Earthjustice press release is also attached.

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***Breathe Project** is a clearinghouse for information on air quality in Pittsburgh, southwestern Pennsylvania and beyond. We use the best available science and technology to better understand the quality of the air we breathe and provide opportunities for citizens to engage and take action.*

*The **Breathe Collaborative** is a coalition of more than 28 environmental organizations, public health professionals, citizens and academics working to improve air quality, eliminate climate pollution and make our region a healthy, prosperous place to live.*