



March 24, 2022

Contact: Debra Smit, Breathe Project
dsmit@breatheproject.org, 412-760-7677

Breathe Project Statement on ACHD \$4.6 Million Fine Against U.S. Steel

Pittsburgh, Pa. – The Breathe Project applauds the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) for its latest action to hold U.S. Steel accountable for ongoing emissions violations at the Clairton Coke Works.

The findings that U.S. Steel operated its plant improperly by allowing 831 uncontrolled pushing operations since Jan. 1, 2020, are disturbing. This period coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic's core period. Evidence has shown that increased particle pollution exposure increased risks of getting Covid-19 and worsened health outcomes.

What will it take to get U.S. Steel to change their plans besides just continuing to pay fines? The \$4.6 million fine registers as substantial, especially the adjustment factor applied because there have been 9 enforcement actions in the last 2 years at this facility. Their operating permit requires the operation of pushing emissions control equipment. That equipment apparently failed over 831 times, releasing pollution into our communities. We have many H2S violations and smell reports as a result.

"The actions of U.S. Steel are truly irresponsible and directly harm the health of Mon Valley residents, particularly elderly and vulnerable populations," said Matt Mehalik, executive director of the Breathe Project. "It is time for ACHD to consider requiring Clairton Coke Works to hot-idle when its emissions equipment is not working properly so that our community's health can be protected."