



## **BREATHE PROJECT Key Points for U.S. Steel/ Nippon Merger Finalization Steelwatch Press Conference**

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- Thank you for the opportunity to present at this press event hosted by SteelWatch. I appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on the health and social impacts of steel production in the Pittsburgh Region, especially in the Monongahela Valley, the site of the integrated steel operations of US Steel.
- I am Matthew Mehalik, Executive Director of the [Breathe Project](#). The Breathe Project is a Southwestern Pennsylvania organization that avails itself of top-level health, epidemiological, and air quality science and public health information. We are a collaboration of [over 60 organizations](#) working to improve air quality, eliminate climate pollution and make our region a healthy and prosperous place to live. We offer a [communications](#) platform that features [public health reports](#), citizen science [technology tools](#), and organizing support for [local community members](#) and [campaigns](#).
- The Breathe Project calls upon Nippon and US Steel to make their highest priority to end the ongoing, severe, negative health impacts in Mon Valley communities because of air emissions from the outdated, neglected capital equipment that comprises the interconnected Clairton Coke Works, the Edgar Thomson Works, and the Irvin Works as part of their new partnership. In addition, the partnership needs to pivot away from fossil fuel-based steelmaking in order to align with world steel market demand trends and necessities.
- US Steel has gotten everything that it wished for in this deal with Nippon (Tariffs that guarantee a price for steel; commitments to retain the entire workforce at least through 2030; facility operation guarantees through 2035; large capital investments to improve production equipment). That means there can be no

more excuses from a company notorious for making promises and backing away from them. The capital investments are there to end the emissions problems at US Steel.

- \$10.8 B in commitments to overhaul operations, with at least \$2.4 Billion in commitments to the Mon Valley mean that ongoing, egregious emissions violations have zero justification going forward.
- People in proximity to the Clairton Works have air quality that is worse than 96 percent of all monitored regions in the U.S. for fine particles based on the latest 3-year average from U.S. EPA monitored data.
- People in proximity to Edgar Thomson have air quality that is worse than 90 percent of all monitored regions in the U.S. for fine particles based on the latest 3-year average from U.S. EPA monitored data.
- It is well known that particles are carriers for hazardous air pollutants that are delivered directly into the bloodstream of residents. As a result, Allegheny County's 1.2 million people are in the top 1% of all counties for cancer risk from point source air toxics emissions. Nearly 90% of the point source cancer risk in Allegheny County is attributable to coke oven emissions, with 90% of those emissions coming from the Clairton facility. ([Cancer Risk in Allegheny County, Pa., May 2021](#)).
- U.S. Steel has paid nearly \$64 million in air pollution [enforcement actions](#), [fines](#), and settlements related to the Mon Valley Works's three facilities since January of 2020 (more than \$900,000 per month on average for the past five and a half years). The company has been assessed over \$7.4 million for these items just since January of 2025, so the issues are not getting better, and the [community health impacts](#) are drastic.
- US Steel is on the record that fixing the US Steel Clairton Works would take [\\$400 million](#), which is well within the budget for these capital improvements.
- Ongoing attempts to evade hazardous air pollution regulations through lobbying and manipulating the US EPA should also come to an end. U.S. Steel spent [\\$990,000 for lobbying](#) in the first quarter of 2025 much of it [in an effort to avoid compliance with national hazardous air pollutant air quality standards](#) for coke ovens and integrated steel facilities. There is no excuse for this evasion of necessary public health protections that were supported by thousands of people testifying publicly in favor of these regulations in a public process.
- US Steel should abandon its [appeal to the EPA administrator](#) to nullify the Title V permit for the US Steel Clairton Works, finalized in October 2024, eight years after the time when that permit should have been updated. The permit was finalized in October 2024 after many past appeals and attempts to circumvent air pollution accountability.

- The Breathe Project, along with community members, would like to meet directly with corporate leadership so that a process of resolving many years' worth of mistrust from ongoing community harms and broken promises can be addressed. For decades, workers and residents across Western Pennsylvania have witnessed a cycle of lofty promises from U.S. Steel—many of which are later delayed or abandoned—often delivered without transparency or meaningful community input. (See “[Mon Valley U.S. Steel Pollution Timeline: A History of #brokenpromises](#).”)
- Real progress will only come when public health and community revitalization are treated as non-negotiable priorities. There have been too many years of promise-breaking and too much emphasis on short-term investments that continue to perpetuate community health harms and workforce anxiety. There needs to be a focus on fundamental strategic priorities that would shift from fossil-fuel based steelmaking in the Mon Valley to cutting edge fossil-fuel free technology suitable for the future.