



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Breathe Project Statement On U.S. Steel/ Nippon Merger Finalization

Pittsburgh, Pa. –

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to end the ongoing, severe, negative health impacts in Mon Valley communities because of air emissions from the outdated, neglected capital equipment that comprises the interconnected Clairton Coke Works, the Edgar Thomson Works, and the Irvin Works as part of their new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.

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](#).”)

There are still many unresolved questions in the announcement, which appeared to involve a backing away from an earlier announced \$14 billion in capital improvements to \$11 billion. In terms of the Mon Valley, these questions persist:

- What, specifically, is being proposed for investments in terms of Mon Valley plant designs and operations besides a rebuilding of the Irvin Works?

- To what extent will these investments address ongoing, negative health impacts from outdated facilities WHILE ALSO addressing associated climate pollution?
- To what extent are impacted community members being consulted in these discussions, not just proxy representatives receiving campaign money from U.S. Steel?
- To what extent will there be investments in the communities where the plants are located to address past and present neglected health, infrastructure, and quality of life needs of Mon Valley Communities?

These questions are a priority because 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.

Critically, 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. Any future investments must prioritize eliminating pollution from old, fossil-fuel based plant equipment.

Breathe Project's Executive Director, Matthew Mehalik, commented, "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."

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