

## Clean air victory for Alabama

Published: 3/30 12:20 pm

Updated: 3/30 12:23 pm



BIRMINGHAM, Ala. -- The United States Environmental Protection Agency reversed a 2008 decision that had weakened Alabama laws limiting emissions from smokestacks.

In one of its final actions, the Bush Administration allowed Alabama to ease restrictions on the amount of smoke that sources such as power plants may emit.

Wednesday's rulemaking action by EPA is a victory for cleaner air across Alabama and especially in areas like heavily-polluted Birmingham, which has failed to meet federal air quality standards for dangerous fine particulates for many years.

"We are gratified that EPA has embraced public health and sound science, and rejected the prior unprotective rules," said John Walke, Clean Air Director for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

David Muhly of the Sierra Club added: "The Bush administration rushed a dirty decision out the door just before leaving office to satisfy the demands of two of the biggest polluters in America. Alabama's residents deserve better, and we are optimistic that today's news signals the promise of healthier air."

Michael Churchman, Executive Director for the Alabama Environmental Council, explained: "What happened here is that some of Alabama's polluters convinced regulators to relax a rule that had been on the books for 30 years – only after citizens sued to enforce that rule. The EPA recognized that was the wrong decision. Technology is used all over the country to better control emissions and should be required to operate continuously in Alabama. I believe that Wednesday's action will significantly help clean up the state's air and protect public health. And, at a time when many see the environment competing with the economy, it is great to see EPA's recognition of no anticipated increase in cost of compliance for sources that were already in compliance with previous requirements."