



Our Children's Earth Foundation | 100 First Street, Suite 100-367, San Francisco, CA 94105

## NEWS RELEASE

Date: June 3, 2002

### **ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS SUCCESSFUL IN BID TO SECURE CLEAN AIR PERMITS FOR HIGH POLLUTING TVA PLANTS**

Nashville, Tennessee --Following quickly on the heels of a lawsuit filed on May 13, representatives of the Sierra Club, National Parks Conservation Association, Our Children's Earth, and A Walk in the Woods announced today that the Tennessee Air Pollution Control Board has agreed to issue proposed permits for TVA 's Kingston and John Sevier power plants by June 14, 2002. Final action on those permits must be made no later than September 16.

The suit, filed by the three environmental groups and an eco-tourism company, sued the Tennessee Air Pollution Control Board and its Technical Secretary Barry R. Stephens for failing to issue federal Clean Air Act permits to some of the largest polluting power plants in Tennessee. By failing to issue the required permits for over three years, the groups maintained the State of Tennessee was failing to control pollution from TVA power plants and was depriving the public of information regarding hazardous air pollution emissions.

The enforceable schedule to issue the permits is memorialized in an order prepared for the Tennessee Air Pollution Control Board's approval. That order will also be incorporated into a court order.

"This is a complete victory for the citizens of Tennessee," said Dave Muhly, Associate Regional Representative for the Sierra Club. "For over three years now these TVA plants have been allowed to operate outside the law. It's only unfortunate it took a court action to bring the state into compliance with federal and state law."

The lawsuit had charged the agency with failing to comply with state and federal law that requires the Board to issue permits within 18 months of the date that a company files a complete application. TVA submitted complete applications for both the Kingston and John Sevier power plants in 1997. Now more than three years after the deadline in state and federal law, no permits for these TVA plants have been issued. The result is that these major sources of air pollution are not required to abide by current emission limits, compliance reporting, and record-keeping and monitoring requirements.

TVA's power plants in Tennessee, Alabama and Kentucky are among the region's largest sources of air pollution, and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the most polluted Park

in the country. Many areas throughout the Southeast suffer from poor air quality, and thousands of deaths are attributed to air pollution from these TVA power plants every year.

"The air quality in the Smokies is supposed to be the nation's best, and instead it is among the nation's worst," said Jill Stephens, Program Assistant for the National Parks Conservation Association. "Getting good air requires getting good information. That's why these permits are important."

"The business of clean air is everyone's business," said Erik Plakanis, a Gatlinburg-based hiking guide. "It's time utilities like TVA took responsibility for the toxins they dump into the air. These permits are the first step."

The Tennessee Air Pollution Control Board is responsible for enforcing federal and state clean air standards intended to protect humans from exposure to toxins, including carcinogenic chemicals, and to reduce smog.

"Our children deserve better than to have their lives shortened and their breath taken away by the emissions from utilities such as TVA," said Tiffany Schauer, Executive Director of Our Children's Earth Foundation. "It's high time the state took the lead in protecting them."

###