



News Release

Release Date: December 18, 2008

Contact: Andrée Keneau, APR
Communications Specialist
616-355-1576

SIERRA CLUB ASKS FEDERAL COURT TO CUT OFF POWER TO HOLLAND, MICHIGAN COMMUNITY

Holland, MI—The San Francisco-based Sierra Club has filed a complaint in U.S. District Court asking for a court-ordered shutdown of the community-owned electrical generating plant in Holland, Michigan.

The complaint, filed against the City of Holland and the Holland Board of Public Works on December 15, alleges that normal maintenance and repair work done at the James De Young power generating facility constituted “major modifications” of the plant that required extensive new permits and equipment retrofitting. The complaint asks the court to “enjoin the defendants from operating the De Young Plant” until the BPW completes the lengthy process for obtaining new permits.

“The Sierra Club is asking the court to shut down our community’s power plant in the dead of winter until we obtain permits and equipment upgrades that were never required in the first place,” said Loren Howard, general manager of the Holland BPW. “Holland and its plants are in compliance with all environmental laws and requirements. We believe their lawsuit is irresponsible, and their actions demonstrate a reckless disregard for the well being of our community.”

Although the Clean Air Act requires notification of state and federal regulatory officials 60 days in advance of filing this type of complaint, the Sierra Club disregarded the requirements in order to file its complaint on December 15—one day before previously scheduled public hearings were to take place in Holland on a new air permit that would allow Holland to build one of the nation’s most advanced, clean power plants that will nearly eliminate greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants.

-more-

SHUTDOWN
2-2-2

“This is a transparent attempt by the Sierra Club to poison the discussions in our community about how best to meet our future energy needs.” Howard said.

Holland Mayor Al McGeehan said “Holland is committed to clean energy practices presently and in the future, and we will move forward to invest in efficiency, renewables sources such as windpower, and advanced clean coal projects.”

The national headquarters of the Sierra Club has acknowledged publicly that “carbon sequestration is a potentially important tool for meeting our energy needs without worsening global warming.” See www.sierraclub.org/energy/factsheets/basics-sequestration.pdf.

Noting that the De Young facility is in full compliance with state and federal laws, the Holland BPW said it is fully prepared to challenge the Sierra Club’s frivolous complaint, and the threat it presents to the reputation and the interests of the Holland community.

The Holland Board of Public Works is a community-owned enterprise providing utility services to the Holland area. We are committed to improving the economic and environmental quality of the community in partnership with our customers, providing reliable services at the lowest rates achievable through innovation, efficiency, and professional operations. We provide electric generation and distribution, water and wastewater treatment to the City of Holland and selected areas.

###