Air pollution from coal-fired power plants has dramatically reduced the visibility at our nation’s most treasured national parks and wilderness areas. These places are an important part of our American heritage and need protection. To restore the spectacular scenic views at these national parks and wilderness areas, a Clean Air Act protection called the Regional Haze Rule requires states to develop plans to clean up pollution and improve air quality at the parks. Cleaning up this pollution also helps protect public health and can boost local economies.

Coal-fired power plants in Texas are sending pollution into many treasured places in the region: the Big Bend National Park and Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Texas, Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma, and the Caney Creek Wilderness Area in Arkansas.

Unfortunately, the do-nothing haze plan that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has proposed fails to clean up Texas’s air pollution and restore the renowned scenic views at these national parks and wilderness areas. Despite the fact that the nation’s largest, most polluting coal plants are in Texas, TCEQ’s regional haze plan does not require a single plant to reduce its air pollution. As a result, the Texas state plan fails to address the serious pollution and fails to protect our parks and wild areas. But state regulators want to give these polluters a free pass.

The Sierra Club and its partners call on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to insist that Texas has a strong plan to cut pollution, clean the air and protect both our health and our treasured places.

**FACT #1 — TEXAS SOURCES PRODUCE MORE HAZE-CAUSING POLLUTION THAN OKLAHOMA AND ARKANSAS SOURCES COMBINED**

Sulfur dioxide pollution (SO2) triggers asthma attacks and can contribute to serious respiratory illnesses. Nitrogen oxide pollution (NO2) gets into the atmosphere where it forms smog pollution, causing bad air days that are unfortunately frequent in cities like Dallas, Fort Worth, Oklahoma City and Tulsa. In 2012, Texas coal-fired power plants emitted over 338,853 tons of SO2, whereas all the coal-fired power plants in both Arkansas and Oklahoma emitted approximately 152,599 tons of SO2 combined. This is a lot of smog-forming pollution going in to our air, but Texas clearly pumps out far more pollution than its neighbors.

**FACT #2 — RESEARCH SHOWS SIGNIFICANT IMPACT OF TEXAS SOURCES ON CLASS I AREAS IN OKLAHOMA AND ARKANSAS**

Scientific analysis conducted by the Central Regional Air Planning Association (of which Texas is a member) as well
as the U.S. EPA shows that Texas coal plants create more haze-forming air pollution than is produced in those states.

**FACT #3 — TCEQ’S DO-NOTHING HAZE PLAN DOES NOT REQUIRE ANY SOURCES TO REDUCE POLLUTION AND CLEAR OUR SKIES**

Under TCEQ’s haze plan, coal companies are free to continue with business as usual; the plan fails to require a single plant to install pollution protections to reduce soot, smog and haze-forming air pollution.

It’s not just Sierra Club and our community partners who are demanding that Texas polluters clean up: the U.S. National Park Service has also found the TCEQ plan fails to protect our air.

**FACT #4 — TCEQ’S HAZE PLAN DOES NOT ACHIEVE NATURAL VISIBILITY CONDITIONS AT BIG BEND AND GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS FOR MORE THAN 125 YEARS**

If the Environmental Protection Agency allows Texas regulators to move forward with their do-nothing plan, Big Bend National Park will not see clear skies until 2155 — more than 125 years! Public lands in Arkansas and Oklahoma will not see the full improvement they need without Texas polluters cleaning up their mess.

**FACT #5 — BENEFITS OF EPA ACTION: FEDERAL HAZE PROTECTIONS IN TEXAS WOULD BRING SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS**

In addition to reducing pollution that harms the scenic views in some of the most beautiful places in Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas, federal haze protections for Texas will have enormous public health and environmental benefits. The Environmental Protection Agency has estimated that in 2015, full implementation of the Regional Haze protections will, nationally, prevent 1,600 premature deaths, 2,200 non-fatal heart attacks, 960 hospital admissions and over one million lost school/work days due to pollution-related illnesses.

The Sierra Club and its partners are working to protect Big Bend National Park, the Guadalupe Mountains, the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge and the Caney Creek Wilderness Area from the haze pollution that threatens our heritage and health.