The San Juan Generating Station (SJGS) is a large, polluting coal-burning power plant in northwestern New Mexico. Located 15 miles outside of Farmington, the plant’s four boilers are a leading source of haze pollution in the state, harming people’s health and dirtying the region’s once legendary views.

The future of this filthy coal plant is being decided right now, and a number of California utilities must decide whether they will stay with it or move to clean energy.

PNM, New Mexico’s largest energy utility, owns 46 percent of the San Juan Generating Station. The remaining ownership is shared among other utilities, including nine California publicly owned utilities (POUs).

In operation since 1973, this coal plant discharges into the air approximately 100 million pounds of sulfur dioxide, 100 million pounds of nitrogen oxides (NOx), and 6 million pounds of soot, as well as at least 1,000 pounds of toxic mercury, per year. The utility and government interests have never undertaken a comprehensive study of the public health threats the plant poses to surrounding communities.

Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides from coal plants cause respiratory illnesses and are key components in the formation of smog and fine particle pollution that can lead to lung damage. Carcinogens and neurotoxins such as mercury, lead, chromium, and nickel are also released into the environment at alarming rates.

SJGS is the second-largest source of air pollution in New Mexico after the nearby Four Corners power plant. According to the San Juan Citizens Alliance, each year the plant’s air pollution contributes to 33 premature deaths, 600 asthma

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**BREAKDOWN OF CONSUMPTION OF ELECTRICITY FROM THE SAN JUAN GENERATING STATION:**

**BOILER 3**

- PNM: 50%
- Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association: 8%
- Southern California Public Power Authority: 42%
  - City of Azusa: 6%
  - City of Banning: 4%
  - City of Colton: 6%
  - City of Glendale: 4%
  - Imperial Irrigation District: 21%

**BOILER 4**

- PNM: 39%
- MSR Public Power Agency (Modesto, Santa Clara, Redding): 29%
- City of Anaheim: 10%
- City of Farmington: 8%
- Los Alamos County: 7%
- Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems: 7%
attacks, 31 asthma-related emergency room visits, and other health impacts, at an estimated cost of more than $254 million. Its air pollution affects various Native American communities in the region, a number of national parks and monuments, the nearest being Mesa Verde National Park, which is 30 miles northeast.

In 2011, the Environmental Protection Agency required SJGS to install updated technology on the plant’s four coal-burning units to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and other pollutants in accordance with the Clean Air Act’s regional haze requirements yet PNM is fighting the order.

PNM hopes that California ratepayers will pay for weaker pollution controls and sink more money into this antiquated coal plant.

Instead of negotiating an orderly transition of the San Juan coal plant to clean energy, PNM wants to keep its polluting facility going and keep California ratepayers spending money on it. That is not a smart plan for Californians whose cities take power from this risky, dirty plant. It exposes them to economic risks and makes them needless contributors to climate disruption.

California utilities should be transitioning to energy efficiency and clean energy like wind and solar, especially in their communities, rather than spending millions of dollars on a coal plant in New Mexico.

The Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council have petitioned for updated standards from the California Energy Commission so that California public utilities can be held accountable for their coal-plant related expenditures under California Law SB 1368. This law essentially prohibits California utilities from renewing long-term contracts with coal plants or spending money that extends the service of such plants.

Californians must shed light on this issue and demand a clean-energy future for their cities:

• POU utility commissions should drop their expenditures in SJGS and move instead toward more sustainable and renewable forms of energy.
• California POU’s should adhere to legislation that bars them from renewing long-term contracts with coal plants or making life-extending expenditures in coal-burning power plants.

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