The Clean Power Lake County campaign is an effort to build a healthier, clean energy future for Waukegan and all of Lake County. Consisting of several environmental, community, and faith organizations, the coalition is working to secure a long-term transition plan for the Waukegan coal plant and new clean energy investments in the community.

**THE WAUKEGAN COAL PLANT**
Originally built in 1923, the plant is one of the oldest in the country and is still the largest source of air and water pollution in Lake County.

**TOXIC AIR AND WATER POLLUTION**
Pollution from the Waukegan coal plant threatens both Lake Michigan and the Lake County community.

The Waukegan coal plant is a significant source of air and water toxics tracked by the EPA's Toxic Release Inventory. According to the data base the plant annually release 14,843 lbs of air toxics and 683 lbs of water toxics. Such pollutants include mercury, lead, and arsenic. Just one gram of mercury is enough to contaminate a 20-acre lake, making fish unsafe to eat.

**AIR POLLUTION**
Pollution from coal plants has significant impacts on human health. The Waukegan coal plant is the largest source of sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and soot in Lake County. Exposure to many of these pollutants contributes to asthma attacks, cardiovascular disease, and premature death.

American Lung Association gave Lake County’s air quality an “F” in their 2016 “State of the Air Report.”

**COAL ASH POLLUTION**
Coal ash is the waste material left after coal is burned. It contains arsenic, boron, mercury, and other toxic pollutants. The NRG plant in Waukegan stores coal ash in two ponds adjacent to Lake Michigan. Groundwater monitoring wells at all of NRG’s Illinois plants, including Waukegan, have shown elevated levels of some pollutants—in violation of Illinois state law.

The Waukegan coal plant is the largest point source of air and water pollution in Lake County and contributes to asthma attacks, chronic bronchitis, heart attacks and strokes.
Additionally, the plant discharges millions of gallons of wastewater a day into Lake Michigan. This water comes in contact with the plant’s coal pile and coal ash waste. This resulted in the discharge of more than 1,000 pounds of toxic chemicals into surface waters between 2002 and 2010, according to the EPA.

**CITY OF PROGRESS: REVITALIZING WAUKEGAN’S LAKEFRONT**

Revitalizing Waukegan’s lakefront is one of the keys to economic development in the community. As noted by the lakefront consulting firm, Edgewater Resources, the coal plant is incompatible with Waukegan’s vision of a revitalized, sustainable lakefront that can attract residential, commercial, and recreational activity. The city has an opportunity to rebrand its image as a true City of Progress by transitioning beyond coal and embracing a sustainable future that can attract new residents and businesses.

**WAUKEGAN MUST PLAN PROACTIVELY TO ENSURE A RESPONSIBLE TRANSITION BEYOND COAL**

By beginning now to plan for the eventual retirement of the coal plant, the City of Waukegan can inform and strengthen its efforts to revitalize its lakefront. The time for smart planning and economic development is now. That is why Clean Power Lake County proposes that the City of Waukegan establish a transition taskforce to bring together key stakeholders that will establish a long-term plan.

**BRINGING CLEAN ENERGY INVESTMENTS TO WAUKEGAN**

The Clean Power Lake County campaign has worked aggressively to advocate for clean energy investments in Waukegan—from holding town halls and round tables with clean energy companies to pushing for advancements in renewable energy policy in Illinois.

To make this vision a reality we need more people to join our fight for a healthier future in Waukegan and all of Lake County. We need bolder action from leaders who will fight for our environment, our health, and our community. Join Clean Power Lake County and let’s build the clean energy future we all deserve.

**Questions? Get in touch!**

CleanPowerLC@gmail.com

---

**ENDNOTES**

1. U.S. EPA: Toxics Release Inventory
2. U.S. EPA: Hazardous Air Pollution