

Mr. Anthony J. Alexander, CEO  
First Energy Corporation  
76 South Main Street  
Akron, OH 44308

February XX, 2004

Dear Mr. Alexander:

The undersigned members of the environmental, medical, political, health, and angling communities, representing tens of thousands of greater Clevelanders, urge FirstEnergy to act now to protect the health of northeast Ohioans by upgrading your power plant pollution controls.

Specifically, we are seeking an agreement from your corporation to commit to installing modern pollution control technologies at the Lakeshore, Eastlake, and Ashtabula coal-fired power plants (and/or repower them with natural gas) to reduce the amount of mercury, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and particulate matter pollution being emitted into northeast Ohio's air and water.

The toxic air pollution emitted from FirstEnergy's power plants is a major source of Cleveland's dirty air and contributes to the ill health effects suffered by thousands of Clevelanders, especially children, the elderly, asthma victims, and those who suffer from other respiratory disease. The American Lung Association reports that in Cuyahoga, Lake, and Ashtabula counties alone nearly 24,000 children and 94,500 adults suffer from asthma, and northeast Ohio's air quality is so poor that the American Lung Association's most recent "State of the Air Report" gives our area a failing grade. Additionally, Lake Erie is one of northeast Ohio's best natural resources and a source of fish for many of the area's citizens. Unfortunately, all of Ohio's rivers and lakes, including Erie, are under Ohio Department of Health fish consumption advisories for mercury.

FirstEnergy's local power plants, according to MSB Energy Associates in a report compiled for the Clean Air Task Force, released a total of 19,337 tons of nitrogen oxide, 71,694 tons of sulfur dioxide, 887 tons of particulate matter, and 656 pounds of mercury into northeast Ohio's air and water in 2000. The negative health effects of these pollutants are well documented. To summarize:

- **Nitrogen oxide** causes ground-level ozone (or smog), which is associated with asthma, reduced lung function, and allergen sensitization;
- **Sulfur dioxide** (or soot) is a lung irritant, triggers asthma, reduces lung function, and can cause low birth weight in infants. It is associated with premature death, while also contributing to acid rain and is a major source of particulate matter;
- **Fine particulate** pollution from power plants is estimated to cut short the lives of 30,000 Americans each year. It is linked to asthma attacks, heart attacks, cardiovascular disease, pneumonia, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease;

- **Mercury** accumulates in fish tissue. The ingestion of mercury-contaminated fish by pregnant women, women who may become pregnant, and young children is dangerous as mercury is a neurotoxin and can cause delays in walking, talking, and fine motor skills, and has been implicated as a cause of attention deficit disorder, autism, and mental retardation.

FirstEnergy's aging Lakeshore, Eastlake, and Ashtabula power plants, which were all "grandfathered" under the Clean Air Act, lack modern pollution controls and continue to pollute more than newer power plants. And, according to the EPA's Enforcement and Compliance History database, these three power plants have pending significant violations of air compliance standards.

Making matters worse, the Bush administration's current proposal to weaken the Clean Air Act puts our communities at an even greater risk by abandoning enforcement of the law. The Bush administration knows that our air quality threatens public health. In fact, the EPA's own panel of experts on children's health lodged a protest with the agency over the proposal in recent weeks saying it "does not sufficiently protect our nation's children."

As you are aware with the testing of Powerspan's ECO Technology at your R.E. Burger plant in southeast Ohio, the technology to reduce emissions from coal-fired plants exists. We encourage your company to be a responsible corporate citizen and neighbor and follow the example of Xcel Energy's Metro Emissions Reduction Project in Minnesota, under which Xcel will voluntarily convert two of its coal plants to natural gas and install best available pollution control equipment at a third plant. The plan will reduce nitrogen oxide by 94.5%, sulfur dioxide by 95%, mercury by 81%, and particle emissions by 70%. The costs of this plan were approved by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to be passed along to residential consumers, and will cause ratepayers to see a gradual increase of only \$3.00-\$5.00 a month in 5 to 6 years, and then a gradual decrease after that peak.

As leaders concerned with public health and safety in our community, we urge FirstEnergy to commit to reducing the toxic air pollution coming from your northeast Ohio coal-fired power plants.

We look forward to your prompt response to our request.

Sincerely,