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American Clean Skies Foundation Hails Decision to Close Potomac River Generating Station

Washington, D.C., August 30, 2011 – The American Clean Skies Foundation (ACSF) welcomes GenOn’s decision to close its 62-year-old coal-fired Potomac River Generating Station (PRGS) in Alexandria, clearing the way for the city and developers to take up the foundation’s redevelopment concept for the property.

Three weeks ago, ACSF unveiled a \$450 million plan for transforming the plant's waterfront site into an environmentally friendly, mixed-used community known as Potomac River Green (www.potomacrivergreen.com).

“We are delighted by GenOn’s decision. Closing the plant will save lives, improve public health and substantially reduce air pollution in the Washington area,” said Greg Staple, CEO of the American Clean Skies Foundation. “We look forward to working with the city to open up the riverfront to the public and make this site a clean energy showcase and job creator.”

“Once GenOn did the math, it looks like the company came to the same economic conclusion we did: This site is simply more valuable for other uses. ”

The Potomac River Green concept includes a vibrant riverfront park and a clean energy and technology center as well as approximately 600 new LEED-certified homes and over 200,000 square feet of office and retail space. It would create more than 2,200 jobs (including construction and site remediation), and produce over \$70 million in new tax revenues.

“Potomac River Green also provides a model for redeveloping many other power plant sites across the country,” Staple said. These opportunities are flagged in a related August 2011 ACSF report, “Repurposing Legacy Power Plants.”

http://www.potomacrivergreen.org/sites/default/files/ACSF_layout_coverANDtext.pdf

Background

The PRGS sits on a 25-acre tract that cuts the city off from the Potomac River. For years, the city has sought to shut down the plant as it has become less important for energy generation. The plant runs at approximately 20 percent of capacity. A recent study by the Analysis Group, funded by ACSF, said the plant could be shut down without threatening the reliability of the area’s electricity supply. See: <http://www.cleanskies.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/PRGSReportAnalysisGroup2011.pdf>

Retirement of the Alexandria coal plant will bring to end decades of harmful air pollution from the plant. In 2010, for example, the plant used over 400,000 tons of coal and emitted over 1.1 million tons of CO₂, as well as 1,145 tons of NO_x and 1,400 tons of SO₂ which both contribute to ozone pollution. All told, it is estimated that pollution from the plant has added over \$280 million annually to local health care costs.

ACSF, a Washington-based nonprofit, was founded in 2007 to advance America's energy independence and a cleaner, low-carbon environment through expanded use of natural gas, renewables and efficiency.

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