



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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DENR RESPONDS TO COURT ORDER FOR EXPEDITED DECISION ON CLIFFSIDE HAP EMISSIONS

Unit Classified as Minor Source of Hazardous Air Pollutants; Revised Air Quality Permit Issued

RALEIGH – In response to a recent order by U.S. District Judge Lacy Thornburg, the N.C. Division of Air Quality today announced its determination that the new coal-fired boiler that Duke Energy is building at its Cliffside plant in Rutherford County is a minor source of hazardous air pollutants (HAPs).

In a court decision about the Cliffside facility, Thornburg directed Duke to move quickly to resolve permitting issues related to emissions of hazardous air pollutants from the new unit. DAQ has now completed its expedited review of information submitted by Duke Energy, which asked DAQ to determine whether the new 800-megawatt boiler at Cliffside is a “major” or “minor” source of HAPs. With DAQ’s determination that it is a minor source of HAPs, the division has revised the air quality permit to require strict monitoring of hazardous air pollutants that will be emitted from the Cliffside plant.

Duke Energy Carolinas applied for the air permit modification to limit the release of HAPs from its new Unit 6 at the Cliffside Steam Station, 573 Duke Power Road, in Rutherford County. Duke received an air quality permit for the new 800-megawatt boiler at Cliffside in January 2008, and the company is now constructing that facility.

The permit amendment recognizes that the new unit’s emissions will contain less than 10 tons per year of any individual HAP and less than 25 tons per year of all HAPs combined. As a result, the unit will be classified as a minor source for HAPs.

“Under the revised air permit, Duke must ensure that the new Cliffside unit’s controls for removing hazardous air pollutants operate at high efficiency,” DAQ Director Keith Overcash said. “The permit revisions include strict new requirements for monitoring the efficiency and function of these controls. DAQ will aggressively monitor Cliffside’s emissions; if limits of this revised permit are exceeded, DAQ will take enforcement action and require Duke Energy to take any necessary steps to return to compliance with hazardous air pollutant rules, which could include reopening the permit.”

The new monitoring requirements include enhanced coal testing, more frequent and extensive analysis of stack emissions, and increased monitoring of scrubber operations.

DAQ held public hearings in Forest City and Statesville during January with regard to the proposed permit modifications, and more than 1,500 citizens submitted written or oral comments during the public comment period. The public hearings only dealt with the proposed changes in the HAP portion of the Cliffside permit, not other portions of the air quality permit that DAQ previously had issued for the new unit. The permit modifications and other information about the Cliffside facility are available for review online at <http://daq.state.nc.us/permits/psd/cliffside.shtml>.

Under the permit that DAQ issued in January 2008, Duke must install best available air pollution controls on the new unit and shut down four older units at the Cliffside facility. The permit will result in significant reductions in total emissions of key pollutants from the facility in spite of the increased power production. Under the permit, DAQ also has the ability to review the mercury emissions limit for Unit 6 in 2010 before the plant actually begins operation and impose a stricter limit if new information indicates that greater control of mercury emissions is possible.

As part of the permit, DAQ also required Duke to mitigate the plant’s carbon dioxide emissions, even though neither state nor federal regulations currently require industries to control their emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. The permit includes conditions that will move Cliffside down the path to carbon neutrality by 2018. Plus, the permit requires Duke to comply with any CO2 emission control standards that the state or federal government may adopt in the future.

More information about other air quality issues can be found at the DAQ Web site, www.ncair.org/.

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