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EPA Rule Limits Arizona Power Plant Nitrogen Oxides Emissions

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By Patrick Ambrosio

The Environmental Protection Agency is requiring the owners of an Arizona coal-fired power plant to reduce the plant's nitrogen oxides emissions by more than 80 percent.

A federal implementation plan , scheduled for publication in the Federal Register tomorrow, will set a long-term facility-wide cap on emissions from the Navajo Generating Station to “significantly reduce” that facility's contribution to regional haze at 11 national parks and wilderness areas, including the Grand Canyon, the agency said. The plant, which consists of three 750 megawatt coal-fired electric utility steam generating units, is co-owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Salt River Project, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, the Arizona Public Service, Nevada Power Co. and Tucson Electric Power.

The EPA's action codifies an alternative to “best available retrofit technology” requirements agreed upon by the technical working group, which includes facility owners, nearby tribal governments and conservation groups, including the Environmental Defense Fund. The regulation sets a cap on total nitrogen oxides emissions from 2009 to 2044 and establishes several alternative operating scenarios that will ensure that emissions cap is met.

The alternative operating scenarios generally require the closure of one of the plant's three electric generating units by 2019 or the curtailment of facility-wide electricity generation by a similar amount as closing one of the units, according to the EPA.

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