

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Comments on Capitol Hill Power Plant 10-1-12

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To: Mike Gordon/R3/USEPA/US@EPA
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Dear Mr. Gordon:

Thank you for allowing folks to submit comments about the future of the Capitol Hill Power Plant via email as I am unable to attend tonight's hearing in person.

I am very happy to hear that the Architect of The Capitol is working towards making the plant become a cleaner and more fuel efficient facility. The symbolic importance of the plant that supplies power to the day-to-day activities of Congress cannot be overstated; what Congress chooses for its own energy has a profound impact on what Americans are willing to choose as their energy sources of the future. It is often easy to forget that Washington DC is more than the nation's capital and the brunt of many a TV news pundit's ire about being 'inside the beltway' and 'out-of-touch.' DC is a community of over 620,000 people who live, work, and play here every day. For most of us, the Congress is just another member of our community of whom we expect the same rights and responsibilities as anyone else.

The Capitol Hill plant has made great progress in the past few years to make its emissions cleaner; however, I am concerned that future reduction targets may be based on higher past levels of pollution rather than the current lower levels. Cleaner sources of fuel are of little consequence if they are simply allowed to pollute at higher than current levels. Air pollution disproportionately impacts poor communities and communities of color and DC is no different. Major power plants and high-congestion roadways in the region are concentrated in low-income neighborhoods and the effects show. Despite an average national childhood asthma rate of 9%, Wards 5, 6, 7, and 8 have all reported rates of over 12% (and as high as 17.9%) as recently as 2003.[i] This illustrates that even modest improvements like those at the Hill plant over the past 5 years have a higher positive impact on those who are the least well off. The Architect has a responsibility as a member of the DC community to continue moving in the right direction and not to backslide on already hard-won gains.

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[i] http://www.dcasthma.org/announcements/asthma_news_release_102808.pdf