

August 10th, 2011

Re: Statement on the Potomac River Generating Station

From: Dennis Alexander, Regional Executive Director, American Lung Association in Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina and the District of Columbia

The Potomac River Generating Station located in Alexandria, Virginia and operated by GenOn Energy, Inc. has been a major source of air pollution in northern Virginia, the District of Columbia and Maryland for many years. In 2010 alone, the plant produced 1,145 tons of nitrogen oxides and 1,400 tons of sulfur oxides, pollutants that contribute to the serious ozone and particulate pollution problem that exists in the Washington, DC metro area.

In addition, toxic air pollutants emitted into the atmosphere by coal-fired power plants cause a wide range of harm to human health, including damage to the lungs and breathing passages and to the kidneys, eyes, skin, and nervous system. Even more serious are their potential to cause cancer, impair neurological function and ability to learn, worsen pulmonary and cardiovascular disease, and cause premature death. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in response to these serious health concerns, recently proposed stricter standards on toxic pollutants, such as mercury, that are emitted from power plants like the Potomac River Generating Station.

Clearly, the impact on public health is significant and of great consequence: pollution from the Potomac River Generating Station is estimated to add over \$280 million annually to local health care costs.

It is time for the Potomac River Generating Station to retire. The plant is more than 60 years old, lacks critical emission controls, and operates at just 20 percent capacity. It is no longer needed for electric reliability purposes in northern Virginia and Washington, D.C. Retiring this plant will help improve public health and bring to end decades of harmful air pollution in the metropolitan region.