



MARTIN DRAKE POWER PLANT

Public Health Fact Sheet

Among all industrial sources of air pollution, none pose greater risks to human health than coal-fired power.

- The combustion of coal at a power plant such as Martin Drake releases a host of toxic chemicals that all contribute to diseases affecting large portions of the U.S. population, including: Asthma, Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, and Stroke.
- In 2010, it was estimated that fine particulate **pollution from US coal plants resulted in 13,200 premature deaths**, 9,700 hospitalizations, and 20,000 heart attacks → total health cost was estimated at \$100 billion/year. ¹

Martin Drake is the last remaining plant in Colorado located in a downtown-urban area and poses a significant public health threat to the local community.

- According to data submitted by Colorado Springs Utilities to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Martin Drake Plant released over 1.3 million tons of toxic air pollution in 2016.
- A 2014 report from the Clean Air Task Force estimated that the 2012 impact from the Martin Drake Power Plant's operation included: ²
 - 5 deaths
 - 9 heart attacks
 - 100 asthma attacks
 - 4 cases of chronic bronchitis
 - *Total economic impact of over \$40 million*

* Since 2012, Martin Drake has permanently retired Unit 5 (46 MW) and completed installation of SO₂ pollution control devices on units 6 and 7.

¹ Schneider, C., and J. Banks. 2010. The toll of coal: An updated assessment of death and disease from America's dirtiest energy source. Boston, MA: Clean Air Task Force. Online at: <http://www.catf.us/resources/publications/view/138>

² http://www.catf.us/fossil/problems/power_plants/

Sulfur Dioxide Pollution (SO₂)

- Sulfur dioxide exposure, even for a short term, poses a severe public health risk to the most vulnerable members of our community including children, the elderly, and those with asthma.

- Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) has completed the installation of SO₂ pollution controls on the remaining two units and they have shown to remove significant amounts of pollution, but data from CSU shows significant downtime where the scrubbers are not operating and could lead to violations of the federal SO₂ standard.



Opacity Monitoring Concerns

- The non-profit organization, WildEarth Guardians, has alleged that [over 3,000 opacity monitoring violations](#) have taken place over the past five years at Martin Drake, and that these violations are ongoing. These alleged emissions monitoring violations at Drake could add over \$100 million in penalties to the costs of operating this plant.

Rail transport

- Coal trains, like those transporting coal through downtown Colorado Springs, release coal dust into the air, which degrades air quality and exposes nearby communities to dust inhalation. Exposure to coal dust can lead to asthma and a wide range of health problems associated with exposure to hazardous air pollutants.³

Coal Ash Disposal

- The toxins found in coal ash have been linked to organ disease, cancer, respiratory illness, neurological damage, and developmental problems.
- Clear Spring Ranch (CSR) is primarily a wastewater and waste management site, including the storage of toxic coal ash from the Martin Drake and Ray Nixon Power Plants. In 2016, 1,260 tons of coal ash from the Martin Drake Power Plant was deposited in the CSR disposal site.⁴

³ https://content.sierraclub.org/creative-archive/sites/content.sierraclub.org/creative-archive/files/pdfs/100_306_LouisianaExports_Fact-Sht-03_lowres.pdf

⁴ <https://www.csu.org/CSUDocuments/ccrclearspringsranchlandfillinspection.pdf>