

[Coal Pollution Will Kill 13,200 Americans This Year & Cost \\$100 Billion in Additional Health Care Bills](#)

by [Matthew McDermott, New York, NY](#) on 09.13.10

[Science & Technology](#)



photo: [John Norton](#) via flickr

A perfect example of how the cost of electricity from fossil fuels isn't fully represented by the price on our bill: A new report from the [Clean Air Task Force](#) shows that in the United States [particle pollution from existing coal power plants](#) is expected to cause some 13,200 premature deaths in 2010, not to mention about 9,700 additional hospitalizations and some 20,000 heart attacks.

Estimated mortality figures for 2010 have Pennsylvania leading the nation with 1359 people likely killed, 1016 people admitted to the hospital, and 2,298 additional heart attacks. Ohio comes in second with 1,221 additional premature deaths; New York takes third with 945 dead from coal pollution.

Per capita, the figures changed slightly. Here West Virginia is first in the nation, with an estimated 14.7 people per 100,000 adults killed by coal pollution. Pennsylvania and Ohio tie for second, with 13.9; Kentucky comes in third at 12.6.

[The report](#) notes,

The total monetized value of these adverse health impacts adds up to more than \$100 billion per year. This burden is not distributed evenly across the population. Adverse impacts are especially severe for the elderly, children, and those with respiratory disease. In addition, the poor, minority groups, and people who live in areas downwind of multiple power plants are likely to be disproportionately exposed to the health risks and costs of fine particle pollution.

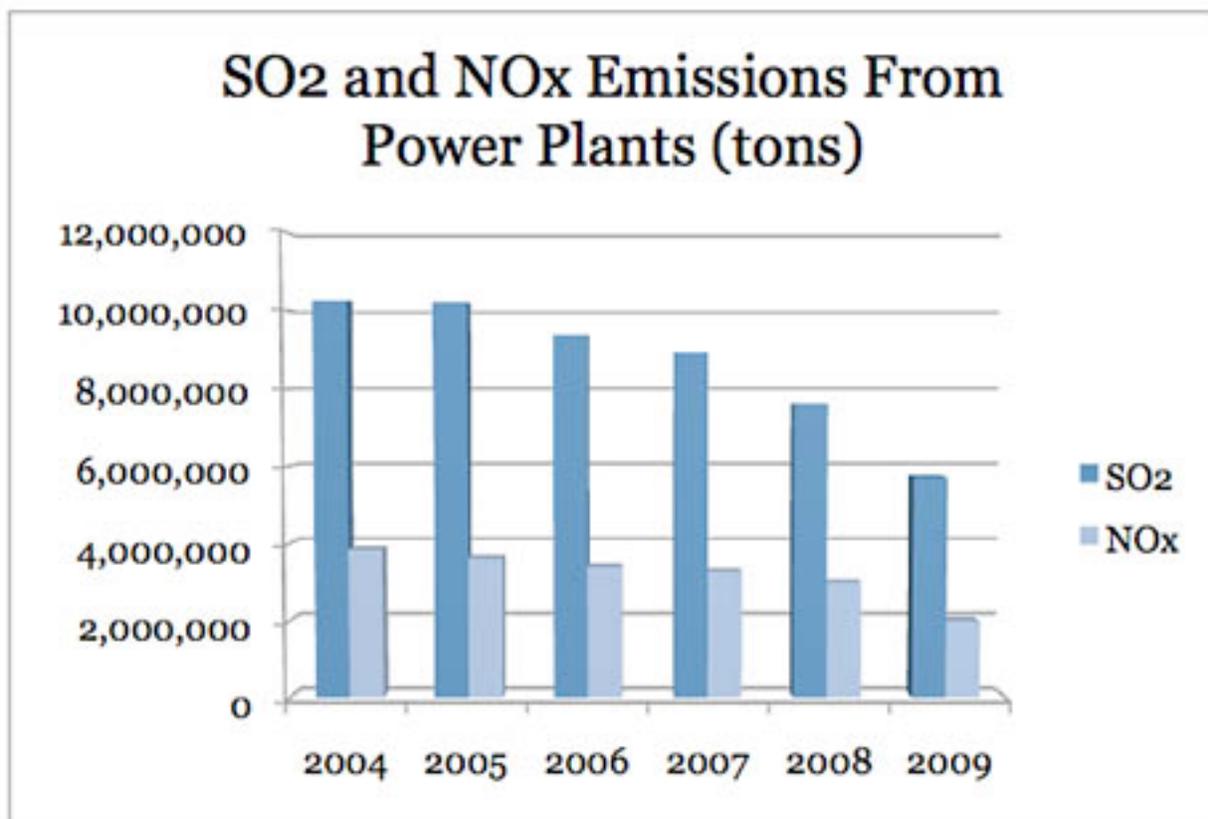


image: EPA via Clean Air Task Force

Deaths From Coal Over 50% Higher in 2004

If those numbers seem shocking, consider that in the last version of this study, done in 2004, it was estimated that coal pollution would cause about 24,000 premature deaths annually ([Washington Independent](#)).

The authors cited EPA action in 2005 under the [Clean Air Interstate Rule](#) as resulting in the declining mortality figures. Though CAIR was struck down in Federal court in 2008, the pollution reduction requirements remain in effect until a replacement is established. In making their projections, the report authors assume similarly stringent requirements will be in place for the remainder of 2010.

Coal Pollution is US' Single-Deadliest Form of Industrial Air Pollution

Even with much decreased numbers, the report says sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from coal power plants will "continue to take a significant toll on the health and longevity of millions of Americans."

Overall, the report says "among all industrial sources of air pollution, none poses greater risks to human health and the environment than coal-fired power plants."

A similar report done last year assessing the health and environmental costs of the nation's 400+ coal-fired power plants estimated the combined [hidden costs of continued coal burning](#) at \$62 billion annually.

Read the original: [The Toll From Coal](#) [PDF]

For additional information please contact:
Sarah Saylor, ssaylor@earthjustice.org, (202) 667-4500 x 216 or
Abigail Dillen, adillen@earthjustice.org, (212) 791-1881 x 221