

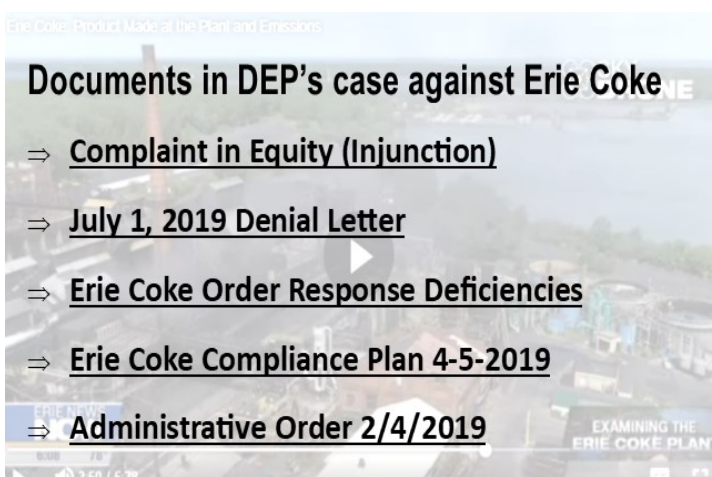
DEP files injunction to close Erie Coke

On July 1, 2019 the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection denied Erie Coke's Application for a new federal Title V Operating Permit. Erie Coke has appealed DEP's decision to deny the permit but the outcome will be determined in future proceedings. That same day the DEP also filed a complaint with the Erie County Court of Common Pleas for injunctive relief, which could potentially lead to the closure of the facility. The complaint states EC has 20 days to respond. If the court grants the injunction, EC has five days to submit a shutdown plan to the DEP and the court for all pollution contamination sources which include batteries "A" & "B", the underfiring system, city boilers 1 and 2, and all other contamination sources at the facility.

Why are we here?

Since the Feb 4, 2019 DEP administrative order, Erie Coke has incurred 41 new air quality violations stemming from failure to maintain equipment properly. One of the most egregious examples is the battery "B" ovens. DEP records show that only 4 of the 35 ovens were rebuilt in 2010 while the remaining 31 have no apparent public record of maintenance and repair. These 31 ovens are 77 years old and could well be in a state of serious disrepair. In addition to the violations stemming from improperly maintained ovens, there are many repeated and perplexing violations such as fugitive emissions leaking from holes in the coke side shed which the DEP noted is in a state of deterioration. The only conclusion HECA can reach is that Erie Coke has neglected to maintain their equipment. By doing so, they not only fly in the face of state regulations but also may be putting Erie city residents and their employees at potential risk of injury and exposure to toxic air.

Erie Coke's public record of pollution does not help our city's image. We support the DEP's decision not to renew Erie Coke's Title V permit at this time. It brings HECA no joy in learning that DEP has also filed an injunction to revoke its current permit, which would effectively cease its operation. HECA had hoped for a



Read HECA's response to the DEP Complaint :
[Statement by Hold Erie Coke Accountable](#)

better outcome—one where Erie Coke comes into compliance, stops the violations, and pays for appropriate air monitoring for the community. Reasonable companies routinely repair and maintain their equipment and keep it in good working order. It is what being a good neighbor is all about. Erie Coke says they want to be a good neighbor so all HECA asks is that they keep their word.

Why keep reporting odors?

Q: Since the DEP has filed an injunction to shut EC, why should we keep reporting bad smells?

A: HECA cannot stress enough that now is the time more than ever to report any and all tar-like odors and heavy smoke *definitely attributable* to EC to the DEP. The legal process is notoriously slow and until a decision is made, Erie Coke will continue to operate. The danger of not reporting the odors is it gives Erie Coke the political leverage to claim their compliance plans are working. Keep the pressure up! The value of coordinated public action cannot be overstated. The more people complain, the longer it stays in the public eye, the more likely Erie city residents will have a chance for a cleaner, healthier air.

DEP Complaint Web Form

Phone: (814) 332-6839

Smoke or Steam ?

We have all seen the photo of a large cloud of emissions coming from Erie Coke circulating around on the internet. It looks impressive but the reality is that the billowing cloud is mostly

just steam and about 1 to 2 pounds of particulate matter, which is emitted from the quench tower approximately every 9 hours.



While not harmless, the steam cloud coming out of the quench tower is far less destructive than what comes out of the main stack, which is not always as visible.

The difference is steam is usually white and is generally billowy or puffy and has a definite end. Smoke is wispy and grey/white or dark grey/black and trails from the stack and other sources into the atmosphere with no ending point. For the 2017 emission year, the DEP reported the stack puts out about 5 pounds of particulate matter an hour, all day, every day. Smokestack emissions contain PM, CO, SO₂ and NO_x and escaping carcinogenic coke oven gas constituents like benzene, benzo[*a*]pyrene and benzo[*a*]anthracene. Coke oven emissions are also known to be linked to asthma, COPD, chronic bronchitis, and other lung diseases.

**Supported by GASP
Group Against Smog & Pollution
<http://www.gasp-pgh>**