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## **Cleaner Valley Coalition: We Energies Takes a Big Step in the Right Direction**

Milwaukee –The Cleaner Valley Coalition applauds We Energies’ announcement today that it will take the first steps to convert the Menomonee Valley coal plant to natural gas. This action has the potential to significantly improve Milwaukee's air quality and the health of its residents by reducing dangerous air pollution.

“We can all breathe a little easier knowing that We Energies is taking this first step to clean up the plant,” stated Karyn Rotker, Senior Staff Attorney with ACLU of Wisconsin, “This is one of the state’s dirtiest plants, in the midst of communities of color, and we are glad those communities will benefit from a transition to a cleaner fuel source.”

The Cleaner Valley Coalition is a broad and diverse coalition, and has asked We Energies to clean up the Valley coal plant in the Menomonee Valley and ensure it complies with the latest health standards as soon as possible. Today, during its annual shareholders' meeting, We Energies announced that they would begin the process to develop the infrastructure for a natural gas pipeline to the plant.

“This is a huge step in the right direction that should be applauded,” stated Virginia Zerpa with the Milwaukee Latino Health Coalition, “However, we must ensure that future decisions made regarding upgrades and construction to the plant continue to have the least negative overall impact on the community and that residents of those communities also benefit from any opportunities – such as job opportunities – new construction provides.”

Milwaukee is consistently given failing grades for its air quality. More than 24,000 people live within a mile of the plant and suffer the worst consequences of the plant’s pollution. Furthermore, Valley lacks modern pollution controls and is a significant source of soot and smog, which are linked to serious health problems like asthma attacks, heart attacks and strokes.

“The coalition encourages We Energies to move as quickly as possible,” says Reverend Brisco, President of MICAH, “People's lives are impacted by Milwaukee's dirty air each and every day.”

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*The Cleaner Valley Coalition currently includes: Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin (BHCW), Milwaukee Latino Health Coalition (MLHC), ACLU-WI, Midwest Environmental Advocates (MEA), WI Asthma Coalition, Walker Square Neighborhood Association, Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH), Wisconsin Power and Light, Interfaith Earth Network, Clean Wisconsin, and Sierra Club, and Milwaukee Riverkeeper. The coalition invites other community members and organizations to visit [www.cleanervalleycampaign.org](http://www.cleanervalleycampaign.org) to join the coalition and to learn how to provide input on future decisions regarding the plant.*