

## **Building Out A Clean Electric Grid in the Beyond Coal Campaign**

### **Council of Club Leaders – September 9, 2016**

#### Preventing over 4,900 deaths, 7,600 heart attacks, and 81,000 asthma attacks every year

With a long-term goal of phasing out coal at the nation's power plants, in 2016 the Beyond Coal Campaign has succeeded in getting over one third of the nation's plants to retire or announce plans to retire, helping to prevent over 4,900 deaths, 7,600 heart attacks, and 81,000 asthma attacks annually. At the same time, the campaign has helped the United States become a global leader in reducing carbon pollution and we are working hard to replace that coal generation with clean energy. In fact, clean energy in the form of renewable energy and energy conservation programs has been a critical tool to help get coal off the grid. Our new 2017 goal is to lock in the retirement of half of the U.S. coal fleet, and replace most of the retired generation with clean energy and energy efficiency over the next 3 years.

#### Winning the Clean Energy Game in Washington D.C. – 2015 Tax Credits for Wind and Solar Power

A dedicated team of policy experts, attorneys, organizers, and lobbyists worked hard from 2013-2015 to make national leaders understand the economic and environmental benefits of renewable energy and to get extensions to federal tax credits for the wind and solar industry. These tax credits help renewable energy compete in the marketplace with dirty fossil fuel electricity that enjoys billions of dollars of direct subsidies from federal and state governments, as well as indirect subsidies via the health and environmental impacts whose costs are passed on to the public. Years of work culminated in a major victory in December 2015 when Congressional leaders approved extensions for the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) for solar and the Production Tax Credit (PTC) for wind. In the 18 months since the extension of the tax credits we are seeing unprecedented growth in both wind and solar across the country.

#### Local Victories – the Heart of the Campaign to Clean Up the Electric Sector

Thousands of local volunteers, activist leaders, partners in other organizations, and dedicated staff are executing dozens of local campaigns across the country to push out fossil fuels from the electric sector and replace them with clean energy. Smart legal advocacy, community organizing, and highly effective media and digital strategies are coming together as people demand an end to the dominance of coal and other fossil fuels. A sample of recent efforts includes – Winning new energy efficiency programs that ensure that low income consumers benefit from more efficient homes and lower bills in states like Maryland -- Local city councils instructing their municipal utilities to phase out coal or go carbon free in cities like Austin and Los Angeles -- Federal and state governments being forced to protect our national parks and wilderness areas from haze pollution in Utah, Oklahoma, and other Western states resulting in millions of tons of pollution reductions from old coal and gas plants.

Whether its talking to members of Congress in Washington D.C., pushing local government leaders to clean up their city utilities, ramping up state energy efficiency programs and tightening building codes, or ensuring that utilities are finally complying with fundamental clean air and clean water rules, there are many ways for Sierra Club leaders to get involved in the local & national efforts to get 100% clean electricity in the U.S.