

## Statement by Hold Erie Coke Accountable

July 1, 2019

Erie, PA

Hold Erie Coke Accountable (HECA) supports the PA DEP's decision to end ongoing pollution from Erie Coke, and commends our DEP for the hard work that led to this action. This was the necessary and proper proceeding given the unwillingness of Erie Coke to come into basic compliance. It is disappointing that Erie Coke has so little regard for its employees' stability, our environment, and the vibrant economic future of Erie. Recent DEP records show that Erie Coke continues to fail to address egregious pollution violations, attempted to change the parameters of their federal Title V Operating permit to less stringent rules, and set a timetable for compliance well into the year 2020. Erie needs clean air now.

HECA bears in mind that this situation mirrors the one in 2010, when Erie Coke's failure to comply likewise forced the DEP to deny the company's operating permit and issue a shutdown order. That process resulted in a \$6 million fine, paid into the PA General Fund by Erie Coke, which brought nine more years of disregard for Erie. Unfortunately, those monies did not fund needed health impact assessments as was the case with even larger fines paid by the same owner's now shuttered sister plant in Tonawanda, NY.

Nevertheless, this is a different moment. The city of Erie has decided to seize the New Economy that values the quality of life necessary to attract and retain talent, where social equity is the defining issue of economic progress. We applaud Mayor Schember, County Executive Dahlkemper, our City and County Councils, and members of our local news media who have helped the Erie community recognize that any corporation flagrantly and knowingly putting our city's people and future at risk will not be tolerated.

HECA hopes our DEP's action is a significant step toward meeting those goals in alignment with DEP's declaration that Erie Coke's ongoing assault on Erie is an environmental justice offense, given the poor and minority communities downwind. But pollution does not discriminate. HECA, despite its limited purview, knows of upwards of 250 complaints to the DEP by citizens throughout the city of Erie in the last year alone regarding Erie Coke's visible and offensive emissions.

Accordingly, HECA has a message for the users of Erie Coke's product: You are your supply chain. As such, your purchase of this coke directly finances Erie's plight at the hands of this law-breaking company.

HECA simply wants our PA DEP and federal EPA to do everything in their power to ensure that Erie Coke complies with the law so we the people of Erie are protected. Furthermore, the economic burden of remediating the site should rest squarely on Erie Coke regardless of whether they stay in operation or are closed down.

\*Hold Erie Coke Accountable is a non-partisan citizen and community initiative, inspired by the civic resolve that Erie's rise as a leading 21<sup>st</sup>-century city of choice rides on high quality of life and a healthy environment, requiring that Erie Coke cease violating its air quality emissions permit and stop contributing to foul-smelling air in our community.

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