Feds Accuse OG&E of Violating Clean Air Act

MUSKOGEE, Okla. (AP) — The federal government has filed a lawsuit against Oklahoma Gas & Electric, alleging that the utility violated the Clean Air Act at its power plants in Muskogee and Sooner.

The lawsuit filed Monday on behalf of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency contends that OG&E increased the output of its coal-fired units without installing effective pollution controls.

"There exists an immediate and substantial controversy between the United States and OG&E with regard to the interpretation and proper application of the Clean Air Act and associated implementing regulations," the lawsuit said.

At issue are renovations done to the Muskogee and Sooner plants between 2003 and 2006. The Clean Air Act requires a company to assess what effect changes to a plant would have on future emissions. The lawsuit claims that OG&E's analyses of future emissions were "legally insufficient."

The company denies the government's allegations. Spokesman Brian Alford told the Muskogee Phoenix [1] that OG&E is in compliance with state and federal requirements.

"We followed procedures, and actual monitored data indicate that emissions did not increase as a result of the work performed," he said.

Alford said OG&E provided the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Control with information about the eight projects at issue before construction began.

The lawsuit asks a federal judge to declare OG&E didn't properly assess future emissions. The federal government also wants the utility to conduct another emissions assessment of the projects in question.

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Information from: Muskogee Phoenix, http://www.muskogeephoenix.com [2]

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