

Environmental Coordination Act (ESECA), 15 U.S.C. Section 791 et seq. (1974), and the Powerplant and Industrial Fuel Use Act (FUA), 42 U.S.C. Section 8301 et seq. (1978), to advance the burning of coal in utility boilers and major industrial fuel burning installations by prohibiting such facilities from burning oil or natural gas. Because coal (or other alternative fuels) often has a higher sulfur content than natural gas or fuel oil, such ordered fuel conversions, in the absence of available controls, could result in a net increase in sulfur emissions. Emissions would increase if higher sulfur fuel was burned with the same level of controls. Emissions could decrease if the applicable state implementation plan required the installation of stack gas scrubbers. Most of the current recipients of proposed conversion orders are sited in the northeastern United States.

Nothing in either ESECA or FUA explicitly addresses the levels of emissions which will result from conversion to coal. However, both statutes and their legislative history indicate that all such conversions must take place under existing federal, state and local environmental law constraints.

The National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. Section 4321 et seq.) requires that significant environmental impacts resulting from each proposed coal conversion be addressed in an environmental impact statement (EIS). E.O. 12114 calls, in addition, for review of any environmental impacts abroad of these conversions; any such effects will be considered in the same EIS documents. Because of widespread sensitivity to changes in emissions from converting powerplants, each site-specific EIS will contain a detailed discussion of air quality impacts.

In addition, the Department of Energy is preparing a regional EIS to address the cumulative impacts of multiple coal conversions within the northeastern part of the United States. The air quality effects of these conversions on Canada will be addressed in that document under authority of E.O. 12114. It is currently anticipated that the regional EIS will be published in draft by August of this year. The Department of Energy will solicit comments on the data and methodology used as well as the conclusions reached in the EIS. The Department is required by federal regulation to allow at least 45 days for public comment on EIS documents. Because of the breadth of scope of the regional EIS, the Department of Energy currently anticipates an even longer comment period. Comments from the Canadian Government, provincial and local governments and private Canadian citizens will be welcome in order to assure that the final document properly reflects the views of all concerned parties.