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2 May 1971

The Honorable George McGovern  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator McGovern:

I am writing to urge you to be sure to participate in the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee hearings on the construction and regulation of coal-fired power plants extant and planned for the Southwestern states.

Without strict regulation these plants pose a threat to the total environment of the, as yet, unpopulated Southwest. They are planned to provide power for the already over-populated urban areas of southern California, which cannot sustain continued growth without the importation of power and water. The business, political, and civic promoters of economic growth of California, in spite of the exhaustion of local resources, continue to urge migration of people into the state with promises of power and water which cannot be fulfilled except at the expense of environmental quality of the neighboring states. They advertise unlimited smog-free power in Los Angeles, which will have been produced by smogging up New Mexico and Arizona.

The Southwestern desert states are the last region of clean air in the United States. Their atmosphere must not be sacrificed for the inappropriate use of power by other shortsighted communities. Los Angeles, San Diego, Las Vegas, Phoenix, and Tucson have destroyed the beauty and pristine quality of their environments and are now claiming the right to destroy the land and water and air of their less populated neighbors. This unreasonable and unconscionable attempt should not be permitted.

To counter the influence of the Fanins and Allotts your presence at these hearings is needed.

I take this occasion also to urge you to vote for bills outlawing strip mining.

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I wrote to Senator Muskie on the general subject of pollution control.

Very respectfully yours,

*Eliot Porter*