



L.A. NOW

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA -- THIS JUST IN

L.A. DWP to be coal-free in 12 years under new plan

March 19, 2013 | 9:26 am

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power will be coal-free within 12 years under a plan announced Tuesday.

Under the plan, the utility would sell off one coal-fired power plant in Arizona and grant approvals for a second plant in Utah to be converted to run on natural gas. Los Angeles gets nearly 40% of its energy from the two aging plants, which environmentalists complain produce the same level of emissions as 2 million cars.

Evan Gillespie, who has been leading a campaign to transition the utility to cleaner energy on behalf of the Sierra Club, said the DWP's plan will be a road map for other utilities seeking to get off coal.

"There's no utility in the country going faster and further," Gillespie said.

State law prohibits California utilities from signing new contracts with coal-burning power plants. That means the DWP's energy portfolio would have been required to be coal-free by 2027, when the utility's contract with Utah's Intermountain Power Agency is up.

Under the new plan, which the Board of Department of Water and Power Commissioners takes up Tuesday morning, the utility will be coal-free by 2025, when the Utah plant is expected to have completed a retrofit to use natural gas instead of coal.

That is well after the date set as a goal by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa at the outset of his second term. Shakeups in the leadership of the Department of Water and Power and the long-term contracts with the utility's power plants have made that goal difficult to achieve.

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--Kate Linthicum at Los Angeles City Hall

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