News Release

Utah Groups Forced to Sue Over Permitting More Air Pollution
At HollyFrontier Refinery

**State fails to protect public health when the law requires emission reductions**

SALT LAKE CITY, UT (April 27, 2015) Western Resource Advocates, representing Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment and FRIENDS of the Great Salt Lake, is filing litigation appealing the Utah Division of Air Quality (DAQ) decision to issue an air quality permit allowing expansion of the HollyFrontier refinery in Salt Lake City.

The case contends that the permit should be denied because the expansion will result in a major increase in air pollution in a region that is already failing to meet federal air quality standards. The modification alone will increase emissions of hazardous air pollutants by 13 tons per year. The HollyFrontier refinery proposal greatly surpasses permitted levels, with its flares alone contributing 240 tons of sulfur dioxide each year, which is more than twice the permit limit for the plant’s entire operations of 110 tons of sulfur dioxide per year.

Fine particulate air pollution (PM$_{2.5}$) in several northern Utah counties currently exceeds the Clean Air Act’s health-based 24-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard. Salt Lake County is also exceeding the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone and is in violation of the sulfur dioxide and particulate matter (PM$_{10}$) standards. Numerous polls show that air pollution remains the issue of greatest concern to most Utah residents.

“We have all felt our eyes and lungs burn and worried about the health of our children and parents. Utah should not permit another new project that will result in a major increase in air pollution and make this bad situation worse,” said Joro Walker, lead attorney on the case and Western Resource Advocate’s Utah Director.

The challenge claims the Division of Air Quality failed to calculate the emissions from the proposed expansion accurately. The heart of the issue is that the expansion will result in a major increase in air pollution, which is not allowed by federal law in an air pollution non-attainment area such as the Wasatch Front. By federal law, the Division may not permit the expansion unless the company secures a greater air pollution reduction elsewhere in the non-attainment area and the Division of Air Quality shows an overall air quality benefit.
“Permitting Holly to emit more pollution in our already highly polluted region is a death sentence for some individuals,” said Tim Wagner with Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment. “Our state agencies must do a better job of reducing air pollution and protecting public health.”

“There is no safe level of exposure to particulate pollution and no threshold below which negative health effects disappear. Some people literally die from exposure. Utah’s agencies should never allow more pollution when there are alternative paths for our economy and our health to improve,” said Lynn de Freitas, Executive Director of FRIENDS of Great Salt Lake.

HollyFrontier is one of the largest independent petroleum refiners in the United States, processing crude oil for gasoline, asphalt and other products. Refinery particulate pollution contains high concentrations of heavy metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, sulfur oxides, nitrous oxides and volatile organic compounds. The refinery contributes to Utah’s air pollution problem by directly emitting hazardous air pollutants and PM$_{2.5}$, as well as the pollutants that form fine particulate matter during inversions.

To receive a copy of the legal filing contact joro.walker@Westernresources.org

For the last 25 years Western Resource Advocates has been one of the West’s leading conservation groups protecting the region’s air, land and water. WRA’s lawyers, scientists and economists craft innovative solutions for the most complex natural resource challenges in the region. Go to www.westernresourceadvocates.org and follow us on Twitter @WRADV.

Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment was formed in 2007 during one of Utah’s worse inversions. The organization consists of approximately 350 medical professional within Utah, and another 4,000 supporting members of the public. UPHE is dedicated to protecting the health and well-being of the citizens of Utah by promoting science-based health education and interventions that result in progressive, measurable improvements to the environment. UPHE can be found at www.uphe.org or on Facebook.

FRIENDS of Great Salt Lake is a nonprofit membership organization whose mission is to preserve and protect the Great Salt Lake Ecosystem through education, research, advocacy and the arts. http://www.fogsl.org/