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# Lawsuit Claims UNC-Chapel Hill Violated Clean Air Act

Nadia Ramlagan, Public News Service – NC December 13, 2019

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is being challenged for not making the same shift as many other schools nationwide, from using coal to natural gas for energy. (Adobe Stock)

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. – A pending [lawsuit against the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#) claims the school is violating the federal Clean Air Act through its use of two coal-burning boilers.

The [Center for Biological Diversity](#) and Sierra Club are plaintiffs in the case.

Perrin de Jong is a staff attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity. He says UNC has a history of Clean Air Act violations.

"They have violated the amount of coal that they're permitted to burn," says de Jong. "There is two other categories of violations we've identified – one is pollution control requirements; and then, the third category is compliance reporting violations."

The university says it has enough natural gas supply in the winter to stop using coal, but that it would need to install different equipment to eliminate year-round use of its coal-burning boilers.

However, de Jong points out that in 2010, UNC initially committed to stop burning coal.

"There was actually this really big, robust nationwide 'Beyond Coal' campaign that happened at campuses across the country, when UNC's Chancellor committed to stop burning coal," says de Jong.

de Jong adds he expects the university's lawyers to petition the court to dismiss the lawsuit.

"There could be a trial, there could be quite a bit of courtroom action, and it just depends on how this goes," says de Jong.

According to 'SourceWatch.org,' there are currently 60 campuses nationwide that continue to rely on coal-fired boilers.