

KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
NEW YORK
SENATOR
RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
SUITE 478
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205
202-224-4451

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE
ARMED SERVICES
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

September 8, 2021

The Honorable Michael Regan
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator Regan,

I write to request that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) exercise its oversight powers in evaluating the renewal of the Title V Clean Air Act permit currently under consideration for the Bitcoin mining operations of the Greenidge Generation plant in Dresden, New York.

The Title V permit held by the Greenidge Generation plant – which operates as a Bitcoin mining facility – is currently up for renewal by New York State’s Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and by extension the EPA. Since the permit’s last renewal, which established Greenidge as a natural gas-fired plant, the plant has begun ramping up its electricity production to power cryptocurrency mining operations. Research by Earthjustice and the Sierra Club indicates that this course of action has increased the plant’s emissions nearly tenfold.¹ Subsequently, the plant’s ownership has taken steps to build several structures to house data processing equipment for use in Bitcoin mining and to further increase its electricity production using natural gas from the Empire Pipeline System.

The Greenidge Generation plant’s operations have changed substantially since its last permit as a natural gas plant designed to help meet the region’s energy needs. The plant’s emissions have grown significantly, increasing its environmental impact in tandem with its current Clean Water Act permit to withdraw and discharge nearly 140,000,000 gallons of heated water into the Keuka outlet—which runs into New York’s pristine Seneca Lake. As such, the plant’s Bitcoin mining operations pose a potentially significant risk to the ecological sustainability of New York’s Finger Lakes region.

Accordingly, I urge the EPA to exercise its oversight powers under the Clean Air Act and involve itself in the DEC’s review of Greenidge Generation’s permit to fully assess the potential consequences of the plant’s Bitcoin mining operations and the effect on local emissions and air quality.

¹ <https://waterfrontonline.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/earthjusticeletterapr6.pdf>.

Thank you for your attention to this issue, and please do not hesitate to contact my staff with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kirsten Gillibrand". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator