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July 24, 2006

Environmental Quality Board
P.O. Box 8477
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8477

Re: Mercury Emission Reduction Proposed Regulation

Dear Member of the Environmental Quality Board,

I am writing to support the Pennsylvania DEP's rulemaking that would substantially cut mercury pollution from coal-fired power plants. As you know, mercury is an extraordinarily dangerous neurotoxin and the Commonwealth's coal-fired power plants emit the second highest levels in the nation. The long-term health problems associated with mercury exposure are most severe in infants and children and yet there is serious and cynical debate against protecting public safety in favor of shielding the generous profits of coal burning utilities.

The debate is reminiscent of the same arguments against protecting the public from lead poisoning, asbestos, PVC, and most recently the carcinogenic damage caused by cigarette smoke. The same pattern of denial and misinformation is followed to suggest the absurd: that one of the most potent neurotoxins in industrial pollution is somehow not a hazard to human health once it has been released by burning coal and finds its way into our water and into our bodies.

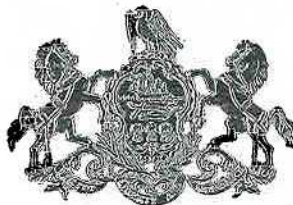
What I find particularly objectionable is that the weaker federal mercury regulations allow polluters to trade emissions credits. Shortsighted pollution credits trading puts our citizens in harms way in favor of rewarding an out of state location. I have rarely heard of a plan that more callously sacrifices our citizens' health at the industrial auction block.

I urge DEP to move forward in enacting its proposed mercury standards for coal-fired power plants in Pennsylvania that defend the public health and embrace its duty to protect the Commonwealth's environmental assets.

Sincerely,


Jim Ferlo
State Senator
38th District

Original: 2547



Senate of Pennsylvania

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