



Maiden Creek Watershed Association

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

Mark Fiorini, President Maiden Creek Watershed Association  
79 Lee Spring Road  
Blandon, PA 19510-9557

July 17, 2006

IRRC - Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market St, 14th Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Re: Comments in favor of DEP Proposed Mercury Rulemaking

Dear IRRC Independent Regulatory Review Commission:

I strongly support the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) proposed rulemaking on mercury reductions from coal-fired power plants in Pennsylvania.

As President of the Maiden Creek Watershed Association, Berks County, PA, and as a Biologist (with a degree in Fisheries Biology and in Natural Science & Mathematics from the University of Wyoming), I am well aware of the dangerous effects that Mercury poses in terms of health and safety. Basically, it would be much wiser and cheaper to prevent mercury from poisoning our water and our air, then to let Mercury enter our atmosphere to burden us with future healthcare costs and superfund clean-up sites.

The Facts are well documented, all one has to do is to go fishing practically anywhere in the state to see the warning signs, posted by our own Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. In fact Every water in the Commonwealth has advisories on fish consumption due to high levels of mercury and other types of pollution. In over 200 sampling locations in the state, fish have such high amounts of mercury that people are advised to eat no more than two meals of those fish per month. The areas with the highest concentrations of Mercury correspond to those places downwind of mercury-spewing coal-fired power plants. DEP data showed that over eight years, mercury levels at a sampling station located in Cambria County near power plants were 47 percent greater than mercury levels recorded at a sampling station located in Tioga County, which is not close to mercury sources. The studies also show that cleaning up mercury pollution at nearby sources results in significant drops in mercury contamination in nearby fish.

As I am sure you are well aware Pennsylvania is number two in the nation for mercury pollution to air from coal-fired power plants. Mercury pollution from power plants forms methylmercury, which poses a major health threat to humans and wildlife. Mercury causes serious neurological problems in developing fetuses and babies. Very small amounts of mercury, passed to the child through the mother's blood or milk, can cause health effects. Mercury pollution is also causing developmental problems for a wide variety of wildlife, including song birds, mammals, and amphibians.

Pennsylvania and 15 other states, are challenging CAMR as ILLEGAL under the Clean Air Act, because it fails to treat mercury as the hazardous pollutant that it is. Should the legal action prevail, CAMR will be struck down, and we will be left with no protections from mercury pollution. This is something that would be detrimental to both you and me.

Mercury pollution controls are available and affordable, and Pennsylvania coal-fired power plants are very profitable. Like a fully paid home mortgage, capital costs at coal-fired plants in Pennsylvania have been paid off. They are baseload plants that run all of the time, making electricity at costs far below wholesale prices, which more and more frequently is set by the cost of electricity produced by gas-fired plants.

An overwhelming majority of Pennsylvanians support the state mercury rule, even if it means paying more on electricity bills. I know everyone in my organization is in FAVOR of the STATE RULE.

I hope you take this issue seriously for my sake, for your sake, for the sake of the environment, and for the childrens sake, for it is their legacy that will be saved.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of the proposed rule for cutting mercury pollution from Pennsylvania's power plants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Fiorini', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Fiorini,  
President Maiden Creek Watershed Association  
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