

July 25, 2006

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2006 AUG -2 PM 2:41

**Comments on Proposed Mercury Rule**

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
COMMISSION

Good afternoon. My name is Heather Sage, and I live at 454 44<sup>th</sup> Street, Pittsburgh, PA, 15201. In my professional life, I work as the Director of Outreach for PennFuture, a statewide public interest organization that initiated this petition for rulemaking with the support of dozens of diverse organizations around the state. However I am testifying today as a private citizen; PennFuture's formal organizational comments are being submitted elsewhere.

As a woman of childbearing age, an aunt, a sister, a daughter, and a friend to many with children, I wholeheartedly support the Department of Environmental Protection's proposed rule to cut toxic mercury pollution from Pennsylvania's power plants.

Though I was trained as a zoologist and an environmental scientist, I don't need any of my training and work experience to know that cutting as much mercury as possible, as soon as possible, is quite simply the *right thing to do*. We cannot afford to continue to allow tons of this poison to spew out of the stacks, and take the health and ecological risks and impacts associated with doing so.

I'm not the only one that feels this way. A recent poll done by Terry Madonna Opinion Research demonstrates that 4 out of 5 people across the state agree: Pennsylvanians want and need a strong, state-specific regulation that cuts mercury, and we want it now, not later. And though we won't have to pay much more in our utility bills to get the mercury out, we are willing to do so anyway. It seems the only parties unwilling to do so are the utilities themselves, and not because they can't, but because their profit margins may go down. Of course they don't account for the harm their products cause all of us when they create their balance sheets.

The federal Clean Air Mercury Rule is as good as worthless to anyone who cares about the health and well being of children and wildlife. It does too little, too late, and has been shown by objective agencies like the Congressional Research Service to be filled with overestimated projections. Pennsylvania is number two in the nation for toxic mercury pollution to the air, and number one in the country for buying up pollution credits from other states. Under the federal mercury rule, it will be no different: dirty plants in our state will stay dirty, and we will pay the price in IQ points.

Opponents to this rule claim that no one is harmed by mercury from power plants. They claim there is no "proof" of cause and effect, that the risks are small and the costs too high. It's a faulty argument. The price of a healthy child is never too high to be borne by society. It's a simple equation: take the mercury out of the air, it comes out of the fish, and it doesn't get into our bodies where it does not belong. We have the power to protect our babies with this rule. We can and must do so. Thank you.