

07/27/06

Testimony to the Environmental Quality Board
Norristown, PA

Hello, good afternoon. My name is Martha Black and I will be voicing my opinion regarding the mercury emission issue at hand from a personal standpoint as a recent high school graduate and as an environmental activist.

We are in jeopardy. The environment is in jeopardy, our health is in jeopardy and the quality of life for future generations is also in jeopardy. The current mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants are devastating, mostly to human health, especially to the young, and the very young, still developing inside the womb. This is the main part of the population that we try to protect the most. The young are still developing and we certainly do not want anything to impede that crucial development. So why then, are we working against ourselves and our values and allowing a potent neurotoxin that causes serious brain defects and learning disabilities to seep into our daily lives and poison us? There is no reason why coal-fired power plants should be allowed to do this to us, especially when the technology exists today to decrease these very emissions immensely, by almost ninety percent.

Many would argue that the main problem with high mercury emissions exists in contaminated fish, and so we should just stop eating the fish in those contaminated waterways. This is completely backwards thinking. People should be able to go out fishing in their local waterways, and eat the fish they catch, normally a very nutritious meal, without having to worry if they and their children are being poisoned by a neurotoxin. And let's not forget about the many, many people in the area who do not speak English or at least not well enough to really understand warning signs at local waterways, advising people not to fish there due to highly contaminated fish, latent with mercury. It simply is not fair to everyone that these power plants should be allowed to continue polluting our waterways and contaminating our fish, simply because they don't want to spend the money to do what needs to be done to protect all our health, and especially the health of future generations. I am speaking to defend all those who cannot defend themselves: new born babies, young children, and even those yet to be born. We need to protect our future generations, not poison them. 2026 is simply too long to wait. We need to do something now. We need to drastically decrease mercury emissions today.

Thank you for your time.

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