

The Center for the Celebration of Creation
8814 Germantown Avenue ☞ Philadelphia, PA 19118 ☞ 215-836-5978

Testimony submitted to the Environmental Quality Board
Public hearing, Norristown, July 27, 2006

My name is Joy Bergey, and I speak on behalf of the Center for the Celebration of Creation. Located in Philadelphia, the Center has been in existence since 1991. We work with people of faith on issues of ecological injustice and threats to God's creation.

Mercury is a proven neurotoxin. It threatens the health of fetuses, infants, children, and even adults. One out of every six children in this country is born with unsafe levels of mercury in their bloodstream – before they take their first breath. How can we tolerate this?

We're the second worst state in the country in terms of mercury pollution. Pennsylvania is home to many aging coal-fired power plants that generate high levels of mercury pollution, creating "hot spots" of mercury contamination at and around these facilities. Our power plants are responsible for 83 percent of the state's mercury emissions. The trading system proposed in the federal rule means that the situation in Pennsylvania could remain unchanged— Pennsylvania facilities could continue to pollute at their current high levels by purchasing credits from facilities elsewhere that have surpassed the federal mercury standard. Also of concern is that the federal rule would delay significant action for two decades, a delay that is unconscionable in light of what we know about the harmful effects of mercury.

The Biblical mandate is clear: In Genesis Chapter 2, God tells us to "tend and till the garden." (Genesis 2:15). It's our responsibility to care for the glorious gift of creation that God has given us. We have the technology to address the problem of mercury pollution, and it's affordable. There's no moral justification for us not to implement the mercury standards proposed by the Department of Environmental Protection. If the federal government won't act to keep our children safe and healthy, then we in Pennsylvania must.

Pennsylvania needs a state-specific mercury rule, and we need it now.

- o We can not allow trading of mercury emissions as a way to lower overall emissions, because a trading system will allow mercury hot spots to continue to grow.
- o We need greater control of mercury pollution faster than the federal regulations will require.

The Center for the Celebration of Creation supports DEP's proposed mercury rule—a rule that would have a real impact on decreasing mercury levels in Pennsylvania.

RECEIVED

2006 AUG -2 AM 9:58

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION