

**COMMENTS PRESENTED TO DEP
REGARDING PROPOSED MERCURY RULE
July 27, 2006**

Pennsylvania is one of numerous states considering the federal mercury regulations to require strengthening. As I recall, years back, a rule had been endorsed by the EPA requiring mercury emissions from the nation's power plants to be reduced 90% by 2008. Those rules were altered a couple years ago to call for a 70% reduction by 2018 or later. These new federal rules were not without controversy. At the time, EPA's own Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee had expressed concern that the new federal proposals would provide insufficient protection (1). Furthermore, it seems that the EPA proposal had been copied, sometimes verbatim, from industry lobbying materials (2,3). Two of the key EPA officials who worked on the proposal had been previously employed by a corporate environmental law firm (3). This federal rule is now being scrutinized by individual states.

I'm here to support Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection's proposed rule to reduce mercury pollution from Pennsylvania's coal-fired power plants 90% by 2015.

However, it's my understanding that Pennsylvania's General Assembly is currently considering legislation that would block DEP's proposed plan and would impose the, in my opinion, controversial federal rule. Why?

Mercury is a neurotoxin. Exposure to mercury can lead to developmental problems in infants and young children.

Reducing mercury pollution will undoubtedly entail a cost to the power companies. But the power companies are not the only ones faced with costs – what about the costs incurred from bringing children into the world already suffering from mercury poisoning – medical bills/special ed/tutors/therapists – not to mention a future made less promising because of exposure to mercury. What about the impact on the recreational fishing industry when health warnings are posted for Pennsylvania's lakes and rivers? As a small business owner, I face the concern of increasing costs and shrinking profit margins. However, some costs cannot and should not be avoided.

I've read that Pennsylvania is one of the leaders in state mercury emissions (ranking second only to Texas) – a dubious distinction. Instead, let's make Pennsylvania one of the leading states in revising mercury pollution regulations and better protecting our citizens.

I support DEP's proposed Mercury Reduction Rule.

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

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Respectively submitted,

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Sources:

- (1) Physicians for Social Responsibility, "New Mercury Rule Fails to Protect Kids, Say EPA's Own Child Health Advisors", Jan.29, 2004.
- (2) "Proposed Mercury Rules Bear Industry Mark", Washington Post, Jan.31, 2004.
- (3) Waxman-Allen press release and letter to EPA Administrator, Mike Leavitt, Feb.12, 2004.