

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING
PENNSYLVANIA'S STATE-SPECIFIC MERCURY REDUCTION HEARING
THURSDAY – JULY 27, 2006

Hello. I would like to thank the Environmental Quality Board for providing me with an opportunity to voice my concerns about mercury. I'm urging the Environmental Quality Board to support the stricter state-specific mercury reduction plan. I'm not exactly sure how to voice my concerns, mostly everything I've heard about how dangerous mercury is, is from my, many, local grassroots organizations. You probably have heard everything that I know about mercury. So, I chose a different approach. I believe that I'm pretty much an 'average joe' kinda guy. My diet mostly consists of meat and potatoes. My recent dinners are from Boston Market, KFC, and frozen pizzas. Last time I checked I was considered obese. I'm not sure who came up with that information. I just saw it on my doctor's wall. The chart says a male weighing 180 pounds and 5 feet 6 inches is considered obese.

I'm telling you this because, no matter what your decision will be, to either support the stricter state-specific plan, or impose the weaker federal regulation, most of my meals will still come from fast food restaurants, or ready-to-eat meals. Sometimes I feel like I don't have a choice. Why would I buy a wild-caught Alaskan Salmon for \$24.99/lb, when I can buy a farm-raised Atlantic Salmon for \$7.99/lb, or if it's on sale, \$4.99/lb? The supposedly "healthier" salmon costs about 5 times the less healthy salmon. If Pathmark is selling it to me, it must have been approved by the FDA, right? KFC has this great deal of 10 pieces of chicken for \$9.99. That's like two and a half chickens for ten dollars. I heard that they were cooking their chicken in oil that contains a very high level of trans-fat. I know that's unhealthy for me, but I justify it by saying that I bike for over an hour a day, and my system will slowly get rid of it. I try to eat healthy, but how many times can I eat tofu-spaghetti. That is the only healthy thing I know how to cook. If I try something else, it's edible, but I wouldn't want to eat it again.

Honestly, I need your help. I need you to control what's in my diet. I know that seems a bit backward of asking the government to control a part of my life, but I'm being bombarded by so many commercials and so many affordable, but unhealthy meals, that either I sacrifice spending money on myself to eat healthier or suffer the consequences of eating unhealthy. If I can eat a somewhat healthy meal and still have money for myself, I'll settle. I remember taking a trip down to Disney World, it was my second time there, and you know what I saw, an "All you can eat – Lobster" buffet. My mouth instantly started to drool. Lobsters up here are \$9.99/lb, so if I can eat two pounds, I'll make up my money's worth. I can indulge because it's a vacation. So, my friends and I went to town on the lobsters. I was able to stuff down 5 lobsters, before they start tasting like metal. I don't know why they started to taste like metal, but they did. So I stopped, but Boy! was that a day I'll never forget.

At that time I had no idea that mercury was accumulating in lobsters, but when I did find out, I checked it on gotmercury.org. They state that their calculations are based on EPA and FDA data, so I give them a little bit of credibility. I found out, with a conservative estimate of each lobster weighing only one pound, I consumed 590% of the EPA's limit. Now, I know that my cholesterol probably spiked for a couple of months after that, but with a good diet and some exercise, I can reduce it. I'm not sure what I can do about the mercury, because it has a nasty

habit of accumulating in my body. I didn't hear anything about sweating it out, or just letting it pass naturally. So hopefully, my body got rid of it, somehow. I've learned my lesson, but if there was a way that my body could get rid of the mercury toxins, I'll probably eat at the buffet again.

Well, I hope that this was a change of pace for you and it gives you an insight that sometimes, us 'average joes', we do not always do what's in our best interest. I urge you to support the stricter state-specific plan because we need you to help us live a healthier life. By having a stricter-state specific plan, I will probably live a longer life, even with my unhealthy eating habits. Thank you for letting ^{me} live just a bit longer.

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