

Mercury Pollution Testimony
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I am here to support Governor Rendell's proposal to cut mercury pollution in Pennsylvania's rivers and streams by 90 percent by 2015.

Pennsylvania's coal-heating industry causes most of the mercury pollution in our streams and rivers. Because it is a heavy metal, mercury settles into the tissue of the fish that can later be caught and eaten by people and other animals.

My primary concern is about health hazards that this pollution can pose for pregnant women and children. Mercury causes birth defects and slows down mental development in children that include ADD and various forms of autism.

While working for a non-profit group Penn Environment, I met a family whose child has a mild form of autism. Their house has a sophisticated water-filtering system that has a reverse osmosis process. The parents are very concerned about their child's health and the level of mercury in his body. They hope to improve his mental health and the level of mercury in the environment.

Being a woman myself who someday will want to have healthy children and an enthusiastic fish eater, I am also worried about the conditions of the rivers and streams that the state of Pennsylvania allows to have. It is a problem when a state puts an advisory not to eat the fish caught in our waters. The environment should be clean in order to support the life cycle that includes all of us.

Again, I urge our state leaders to cut the mercury pollution and support Governor Rendell's proposal.

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