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Pennsylvania's power plants have the second highest mercury emissions in the country. We need to reduce mercury pollution from the state's coal-fired power plants beyond what would be accomplished by the federal program.

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, "exposure to mercury can lead to developmental problems in infants and young children, affecting the way they learn, think, memorize and behave."

Infants, young children and women of childbearing age are at the greatest risk from mercury, as mercury can pass through the human placenta to developing fetuses and through breast milk to nursing infants. The Natural Resources Defense Council says, "During the first several years of life, a child's brain is still developing and rapidly absorbing nutrients. Prenatal and infant mercury exposure can cause mental retardation, cerebral palsy, deafness and blindness. Even in low doses, mercury may affect a child's development, delaying walking and talking, shortening attention span and causing learning disabilities.

"In adults, mercury poisoning can adversely affect fertility and blood pressure regulation and can cause memory loss, tremors, vision loss and numbness of the fingers and toes. A growing body of evidence suggests that exposure to mercury may also lead to heart disease."

The National Academy of Sciences panel warned, some children exposed in utero by their mothers' fish consumption are at risk of falling in the group of children "who have to struggle to keep up in school and who might require remedial classes of special education."

The PA Department of Environmental Protection says children affected by mercury "show lowered intelligence, impaired hearing and poor coordination."

Teachers are very concerned about environmental hazards that affect children's ability to learn. The Pennsylvania State Education Association voted to oppose S.B. 1201 and H.B. 2610, which would stop the process under way in Pennsylvania to reduce mercury pollution.

As a former home economics teacher who has studied nutrition, I know we need fish in our diet to get enough Omega-3 fatty acids to decrease the risk of heart disease. Fish is also an important source of protein and vitamin D. But while our fish are contaminated with mercury, instead of eating more fish for the health benefits, we have to limit the fish we eat to avoid toxins.

Fishing is a popular sport in our state. It is unacceptable that the fish caught in PA are not safe to eat.

Learning disabilities are increasing. Pennsylvanians can't afford to wait for mercury reductions from coal-fired power plants, our health is at risk now.

The federal mercury rule does not do enough and is too slow. The Bush administration's federal rule allows power plants to get away with not reducing their mercury pollution by purchasing 'credits' from power plants in other areas. This does not solve the mercury problem in PA.

To protect the health of people in PA, we need to enact Gov. Rendell's new state-level regulation requiring 90% mercury pollution reductions from the state's coal-fired power power plants by 2015.

http://www.mercola.com/2001/apr/25/mercury_fish.htm

<http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/pollprev/p3erie/Whatarethehuman.html>

<http://www.oehha.ca.gov/fish/hg/index.html>

<http://orf.od.nih.gov/Environmental+Protection/Mercury+Free/MercuryHealthHazards.htm>

Pennsylvania's power plants have the second highest mercury emissions in the country. We need to reduce mercury pollution from the state's coal-fired power plants beyond what would be accomplished by the federal program.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the National Academy of Sciences, and the Natural Resources Defense Council say exposure to mercury can affect the way children learn, think, memorize and behave. It can lower their intelligence, damage their hearing, and cause learning disabilities.

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