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Good morning, and thank you very much to the members of the Environmental Quality Board. My name is Claudia Kirkpatrick; I live at 3763 Orpwood Street in Pittsburgh, and I've been a resident of Pennsylvania since 1973. I am a member of the Sierra Club and am speaking on behalf of the Sierra Club's Allegheny Group (which has about 5,700 members).

We have talked with a lot of people about the issue of mercury emissions, and it is very impressive how extremely concerned people from all walks of life are about the dangers of mercury pollution. And how angry they will be if the Environmental Quality Board puts the financial interests of the power companies ahead of the health concerns of Pennsylvania citizens. People are worried for themselves, but they are even more worried for their children and grandchildren.

That worry was evidenced by the approximately 4000 postcards people eagerly signed and that we sent to Secretary McGinty, asking that the DEP write strict mercury pollution controls. That worry was evident in the Sierra Club's "hair testing" event in August 2005: we used up the 40 test kits we had and had to turn people away, as so many people – particularly families concerned about their babies – wanted to know how much poison they already had in their systems.

That worry was also very evident at the Sierra Club's "town hall meeting," held in September 2005, attended by at least 70 people who were eager to voice their concerns and to learn how they could help. And Pennsylvanians are continuing to support strict mercury pollution controls by signing postcards which we are sending to the EQB.

People are also very concerned about the Pennsylvania fishing and recreational industry. A great many Pennsylvanians enjoy fishing, and they very much want the EQB to put in place the stringent emissions controls that would enable them to eat more of their catch. Moreover, according to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Pennsylvania fishing industry "has a direct economic impact of \$800 million each year." The poisoning of Pennsylvania's lakes and rivers is directly harming not only the health of our people but also our economy.

The evidence is very clear that Pennsylvania's power plants are the major cause of mercury pollution in Pennsylvania. Barb Grover has just told you very clearly how the costs of the significant reductions of mercury toxins from the DEP regulations will not be a serious burden on Pennsylvania electricity customers. She has also explained clearly why an emissions trading program will not help Pennsylvanians. Her data is carefully documented, as the EQB will see from her written text.

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The *Post-Gazette* reminded us last Saturday (2) that in 19<sup>th</sup> century England, “hatters suffered tremors known as hatter’s shakes, even hallucinations and psychosis,” due to the mercury toxins then used in making hats. Lewis Carroll captured for all of us the image of the Mad Hatter in “Alice in Wonderland.” Although mercury is no longer used in making hats, mercury still poses a significant danger to all Pennsylvanians, especially to the youngest and most vulnerable of us.

Pennsylvania has the second highest level of mercury pollution in the United States – behind only Texas! We Pennsylvanians do not want our babies and children to continue to suffer because the power plant operators are unwilling to spend the relatively small sums needed to protect our citizens. We therefore urge the Environmental Quality Board to adopt the very positive regulations proposed by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to make these remarks.

Notes:

1. Penn Future, <http://www.pennfuture.org/smokestack/mercury/hgpr904.html> remarks.
2. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Saturday, July 22, 2006; page B-6.