

ATTN: Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2009-0234

June 9th, 2011

Dear EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson,

As members of the environmental, public health and faith communities, we write to applaud you for your proposed Mercury and Air Toxics Rule, which significantly cuts toxic air pollution from power plants. As you work to finalize this rule, we urge you to keep the final rule just as strong as the proposed version.

Our families should be able to breathe clean air and drink clean water—without worrying about mercury in their bloodstream, soot in their lungs, or lead in their water.

Yet coal-fired power plants spew hundreds of thousands of tons of hazardous air pollutants like these into our air and water every year. These pollutants are linked to cancer, heart disease, neurological damage, birth defects, asthma attacks and even premature death. When coal-fired power plants emit mercury from their smokestacks, rain, snow, and dust particles wash it out of the air, onto land, into waterways, and ultimately into our food chain. Mercury pollution poses particular risks to children, affecting their ability to walk, talk, read, and write, and it is so widespread that at least one in ten women of childbearing age has enough mercury in her blood to put her baby at risk, should she become pregnant. Moreover, low-income and minority communities often bear a greater burden of the effects of toxic pollution from power plants, as they live closer to the polluting facilities than most Americans.

Because mercury is the most common contaminant in fish in the U.S., every state has set some sort of fish advisory due to unsafe levels of the toxic pollutant. Wildlife that is exposed to mercury may die or, depending upon the level of exposure, have reduced fertility or complete reproductive failure, as well as slower growth and development, and other vulnerabilities. High levels of mercury have been found in species at every level in the food chain, threatening many different species, including the common loon in Maine and the endangered Florida panther.

Coal-fired power plants are the single largest source of mercury pollution, arsenic and acid gases, and account for 25 percent of all toxic metal emissions in the United States. Furthermore, coal-fired power plants are responsible for 99 percent of all mercury emissions from the power sector in the United States.

For decades, the coal industry has used its undue influence on decision makers to delay implementation of strong standards to cut this dangerous, toxic air pollution from its facilities, going so far as to work with Bush administration officials to set a severely flawed and illegal standard that had few, if any, actual health benefits.

We are thrilled you and your agency have finally proposed a strong standard that will for the first time cut mercury emissions from power plants nationwide by 91 percent, reduce arsenic and acid gases by 91 percent, prevent 12,200 trips to the hospital, and save up to 17,000 lives each year once it is implemented.

We applaud you for this strong standard and urge you to keep it just as strong in the final version of the Mercury and Air Toxics Rule. We look forward to working with you on this matter.

Sincerely,

National
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Health, Environment & Justice

Center for International Environmental Law
Ceres
Defenders of Wildlife

Democracia, Inc.
Earth Day Network
Energy Action Coalition
Environment America
Environment Defense Fund
Environment Health Fund
Green Sanctuary Committee of the UUFSC,
Ministry for Earth
Greenpeace USA
Health Care Without Harm
Healthy Child Healthy World
Interfaith Power & Light
League of Conservation Voters
League of Women Voters of the United States
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Sierra Club
US Climate Action Network
Voices For Progress

Alaska

Alaska Center for the Environment
Alaska Community Action on Toxics

Alabama

Alabama Environmental Council
Alabama Rivers Alliance
Gasp

Arizona

Environment Arizona

California

California Coastal Protection Network
Coastal Environmental Rights Foundation
Environment California
Got Mercury
KyotoUSA
Seventh Generation Advisors

Colorado

Environment Colorado

Connecticut

Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice
Environment Connecticut

Florida

Florida Wildlife Federation
Environment Florida
Voces Verdes

Georgia

Altahama Riverkeeper

Environment Georgia
Environmental Justice Resource Center
Fall-Line Alliance for a Clean Environment

Iowa

Environment Iowa

Illinois

American Bottom Conservancy
Citizens Against Ruining the Environment
Center for Neighborhood Technology
Environment Illinois
Green Oxford
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
KM Medical Billing, Inc.
Illinois Environmental Council
Prairie Rivers Network
Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan
Chicago
Riley Public Affairs
The Autism Society of Illinois

Indiana

Heartwood
Indiana Toxics Action Project

Kansas

Great Plains Alliance for Clean Energy
Sustainable Sanctuary Coalition
True Blue Women

Kentucky

Cumberland (Kentucky) Chapter Sierra Club
Kentucky Environmental Foundation

Massachusetts

C-10 Foundation
Clean Water Action Alliance of MA
Environment Massachusetts
Environmental League of MA
Green Decade Newton
MA League of Environmental Voters
Massachusetts Climate Action Network
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Sciencecorps

Maryland

Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Environment Maryland
Maryland League of Conservation Voters

Maine

Environment Maine

Maine League of Conservation Voters

Michigan

Environment Michigan
Michigan Environmental Council
Progress Michigan
Michigan League of Conservation Voters
Michigan Student sustainability Coalition
Michigan Clean Water Action
Banco NAACP
Ecology Center

Minnesota

Alliance for Sustainability
Audubon Minnesota
Clean Water Action Alliance of MN
Conservation Minnesota
Duluth Audubon Society
Environment Minnesota
Envision Minnesota
Fresh Energy
Friends of the Mississippi River
Izaak Walton League, MN Division
Mankato Area Environmentalists
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
Minnesota Conservation Federation
Minnesota Ornithologists' Union
Minnesota Public Interest Research Group
Northeast Minnesotans for Wilderness
Preventing Harm Minnesota
Save Lake Superior Association
SE Minnesotans for Environmental Protection
Sierra Club –North Star Chapter
St. Croix River Association
Will Stegar Foundation
WaterLegacy

Missouri

Gateway Green Alliance
Howardville Community Betterment
Labadie Environmental Organization (LEO)
Missouri Coalition for the Environment
Missouri Votes Conservation
Environment Missouri
Missouri Stream Team Watershed Coalition

Montana

Alternative Energy Resources Organization
(AERO)
Citizens for a Better Flathead
Citizens for Clean Energy, Inc.
Clark Fork Coalition
Environment Montana

Greater Yellowstone Coalition
Green Our Faiths
Montana Audubon
Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club
Montana Conservation Voters
National Parks Conservation Association
Northern Plains Resource Council
Park Country Environmental Council
University of Montana Climate Action Now
(UMCAN)
Western Organization of Resource Councils

North Carolina

Appalachian Voices
Citizens Against Titan
Clean Air Carolina
Environment North Carolina
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

New Hampshire

Environment New Hampshire
Green Alliance
New Hampshire Green Coalition
New Hampshire Parent Teacher Association

New Jersey

BlueWaveNJ
Environment New Jersey
New Jersey Highlands Coalition

New Mexico

Environment New Mexico
International Hyperbaric Medical Association
New Energy Economy
New Mexico Environmental Law Center
New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light

Nevada

Environment Nevada

New York

Clean New York
Environment New York

Ohio

Audubon Ohio
Canton Audubon Society
Environment Ohio
Environmental Health Watch
Envirosapes Landscape Design
Green Oxford
Initiative Consulting
Lake Erie Waterkeeper Inc

Ohio PTA
Physicians for Social Responsibility , Northeast
Ohio
Silvertip Productions
The Ohio Environmental Council
Western Coyahoga Audubon Society

Oklahoma

Bokoshe Environmental Cause (B.E. Cause)
LEAD Agency, Inc.

Oregon

Environment Oregon

Pennsylvania

Allegheny Group, Sierra Club
Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture)
Clean Air Council
Clean Water Action of Pennsylvania
One Million Calls for Clean Energy
PennEnvironment
Philadelphia Physicians for Social Responsibility
Save the Park for the Delaware Water Gap
National Recreation Area
The Center for the Celebration of Creation

Rhode Island

Environment Rhode Island

South Carolina

Audubon South Carolina
Charleston Natural History Society

HHI Audubon Society
Nature Adventures

Texas

Austin Physicians for Social Responsibility
Bastrop County Audubon Society
Clean Economy Coalition
Endangered Species Media Project
Environment Texas
No Coal Coalition
Save Our Springs Alliance
Texas Center for Policy Studies: Caddo Lake
Institute
Texas League of Conservation Voters
Texas Rivers Protection Association
The Harris Country Green Party

Utah

Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment

Virginia

Environment Virginia
Greater Washington Interfaith Power & Light

Washington

Environment Washington

Wisconsin

Mercury Free Wisconsin
Midwest Environmental Advocates
Wisconsin Environment
Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters