

Administrator Wheeler
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Re: EPA-HQ-OAR-2018-0794

Dear Administrator Wheeler:

As religious organizations representing a diverse group of congregants across the United States, we urge you to keep the Environmental Protection Agency's Mercury and Air Toxic Standards in place. These standards have been instrumental in reducing dangerous mercury and other toxic air pollutants released from coal and oil burning power plants.

As people of faith, our faith compels us to protect vulnerable populations, including women and children. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that is particularly dangerous to pregnant women and children.

Coal-fired power plants are the most significant source of mercury pollution, emitting almost three quarters of all mercury air emissions in the U.S. The current mercury pollution standards reduce dangerous levels of mercury, heavy metals and other toxic air pollutants released from coal- and oil-burning power plants. As projected by the Environmental Protection Agency the Mercury and Air Toxic Standards avoid up to 11,000 premature deaths, 5,000 heart attacks and 130,000 asthma attacks each year.

In particular, we are opposed to any changes to the current rule that would exclude co-benefits or ancillary benefits from the rule's cost-benefit analysis. This is a reversal from the guidelines issued by the George W. Bush Administration in 2003. Limiting the benefits attributed to curbing mercury pollution in its cost-benefit analysis not only short changes the health of vulnerable populations but puts the health and wellbeing of all communities at risk.

As faith organizations we strive not only for environmental stewardship but to protect human health and wellbeing. Rolling back mercury pollution standards does not fulfill EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment and fails in our duty to protect God's creation. The current Mercury and Air Toxic Standards help us in our pursuit to care for God's creation and uphold the common good.

Sincerely,

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Creation Justice Ministries
Disciples Center for Public Witness
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation

Interfaith Power & Light
Leadership Conference of Womens Religious
Metro New York Catholic Climate Movement
Mormon Environmental Stewardship Alliance
National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.
National Baptist Convention of America International
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Office of Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation, Sisters of Charity of New York
Sisters of Mercy's Institute Justice Team
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society