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DEP Data Shows Power Plant Mercury Emissions Do Not Cause Local “Hotspots”
*Labor, Business, Coal Industry Coalition Supports Legislation Reducing
Mercury Emissions from Power Plants by 86%*

Harrisburg (June 5) – Information from the Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP’s) own Mercury Monitoring Network shows no connection between a 47 percent reduction in mercury emissions from power plants and an alleged mercury “hotspot.”

Last week DEP made the allegation that high mercury readings from a monitoring station in Cresson, Cambria County, were caused by four nearby coal-fired power plants—Homer City, Keystone, Seward and Conemaugh.

“What we actually found when we looked at the data was three of those plants – Homer City, Keystone and Seward—had installed state-of-the-art pollution control equipment that reduced their mercury emissions by 47 percent, yet there was no change in the amount of mercury seen at DEP’s Cresson monitoring site,” said Douglas L. Biden, President Electric Power Generation Association. “This indicates that DEP’s speculation about hotspots of mercury caused by local power plants is simply not true based on their own data.”

Mercury emissions declined at those plants due to the installation of advanced air pollution control equipment to reduce air pollutants causing acid rain and ground level ozone pollution. In the case of Conemaugh, that advanced equipment was installed in 1994 and 1995 before DEP began monitoring for mercury.

Statewide, there already has been a 33 percent reduction in mercury emissions from Pennsylvania power plants from 9,958 pounds in 1999 to 6,640 pounds in 2004, according to official reports by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the federal Toxic Release Inventory.

“The fact that we also have not seen any discernable reduction, let alone a 33 percent reduction statewide in DEP’s Mercury Monitoring Network in response to the 33

percent reduction in mercury emissions from power plants proves again there is no direct link and that there are no locally caused mercury hotspots due to power plants,” said Biden.

“What this information does say is that mercury is a multi-state and regional problem, just like acid rain and ground level ozone pollution, and it should be handled in the same way through a cap and trade program,” said Biden. “Because DEP’s proposed mercury rule does not include the cap and trade system means we will not be able to get the mercury reductions we need through the most cost-effective means possible.”

**Mercury Reductions Upwind of Cresson Monitoring Station
and Statewide***
(in pounds of mercury)

	Start	Most Recent	Difference	Reduction
Seward ('01-'04)	175	3	172	98%
Homer City ('00-'04)	1,369	658	711	53%
Keystone ('01-'04)	1,300	832	468	36%
Conemaugh**				
Total Reduction 3 Plants	2,844	1,493	1,351	47%
Total State EGU ('99-'04)	9,958	6,640	3,318	33%

* Based on U.S. EPA and Toxic Release Inventory data.

** Wet scrubbers were installed in 1994 and 1995 the year before the DEP Mercury Monitoring Network was established so it would not have recorded mercury reductions before the scrubbers went online.

Biden also said that Dr. James A. Lynch, from Pennsylvania State University who runs DEP’s Mercury Monitoring Network, told DEP’s Mercury Rule Work Group last October that information from the Network alone could not be used to determine the source of mercury emissions being deposited in Pennsylvania.

Dr. Lynch has recommended DEP do what is called a “source/receptor” study to pinpoint the source of mercury emissions for the last several years, but DEP did not respond to the suggestion.

The Electric Power Generation Association is part of a coalition of labor, business and the coal industry that supports bipartisan legislation in the Senate and House to reduce mercury emissions from Pennsylvania power plants by 86 percent.

The legislation is Senate Bill 1201 and House Bill 2610.

The coalition has criticized a rule proposed by the Department of Environmental Protection which could result in the premature retirement of Pennsylvania’s coal-fired

electric generating capacity, the loss of family-sustaining jobs, increase electricity costs for home and business customers and cause power plant owners to switch to burning lower-mercury coal from out-of-state.

The members of the coalition include:

- United Mine Workers of America
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
- Pennsylvania Coal Association
- Electric Power Generation Association
- Pennsylvania Chamber of Business & Industry
- Pennsylvania Chemical Industry Council
- Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association
- Associated Petroleum Industries of Pennsylvania

For more information visit the www.PaEnergyNews.com website.

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