

Protect Babies' Brains: Protect Limits on Mercury and Air Toxics

America's babies are healthier, and our air is cleaner, thanks to successful limits on pollution called the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards. But the Trump Administration is trying to undermine the standards.

- **Mercury permanently damages babies' brains.**
 - Mercury from coal-fired power plants is emitted into the air, falls into waterways, and accumulates in fish that families eat.
 - This potent neurotoxin causes permanent damage to the brains of babies and unborn children, leading to developmental delays, learning disabilities and birth defects.
- **Power plants also emit other toxic air pollutants that cause disease and premature death.**
 - Air pollution from coal- and oil-fired power plants contains more than 80 hazardous air pollutants identified by the Clean Air Act for control, including arsenic, chromium, lead, formaldehyde, acid gases, dioxins, and furans.
 - These pollutants can cause cancer; damage the eyes, skin, and breathing passages; harm the kidneys, lungs, and nervous system; cause cardiovascular disease; and kill.
 - They harm people not only near the plants, but also hundreds of miles away.
 - Cleaning up air toxics reduces sulfur dioxide and particulate matter.
 - Babies and children, pregnant women, older adults, and people with lung disease, heart disease or diabetes face higher risk from these pollutants.
- **The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards work. They've cleaned up much of this pollution.**
 - The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) are a success story.
 - The standards have achieved a 90% reduction in mercury emissions from power plants, and cleaned up dangerous particle pollution at the same time.
 - When the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) adopted they rule, they estimated that MATS would prevent up to 11,000 premature deaths each year and prevent 4,700 heart attacks, 130,000 asthma attacks, and 5,700 hospital visits annually.
 - Power plants have already finished making investments to meet the standards, including installing pollution controls now in operation.
- **MATS enjoy bipartisan support in Congress, plus support from health and industry groups.**
 - The standards were put in place with support from public health and medical organizations, the environmental and faith communities, and clean energy companies.
 - Strong bipartisan opposition defeated a 2012 Congressional Review Act resolution to overturn MATS (S.J. Res 37).
 - Electric utilities and senators in both parties urged EPA in 2018 to maintain the standards.



The Trump Administration must not alter or reconsider limits on mercury and other air toxics from power plants. Americans have nothing to gain from the rollback of these lifesaving, highly effective standards, and many people – including pregnant women and their unborn children – have everything to lose.