

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**MEDIA CONTACT:** [Caren Kagan Evans](#), ECI Communications, 301-467-6337 (cell)**MEDIA ADVISORY****EPA WON'T REGULATE MERCURY AND OTHER TOXIC EMISSIONS FROM POWER PLANTS, PUTTING
PEOPLE IN FENCELINE COMMUNITIES, PREGNANT WOMEN AND CHILDREN AT GREATER RISK
EPN Experts Available for Interviews**

Washington, DC (April 16, 2020) -- Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is expected to announce its regulatory finding for the [Mercury and Air Toxics Standards](#) (MATS), and is likely to conclude it is not “appropriate or necessary” to regulate emissions of the potent neurotoxin mercury and other hazardous air pollutants from coal- and oil-fired power plants.

The decision was based on a cost-benefit analysis that erroneously argued that the costs of complying with the standards vastly exceeded the benefits of the regulation. The decision did not consider the “co-benefits” of reducing air pollutants, such as fine particles, which are not the target of the regulation. EPA does not deny that co-benefits are real and result directly from the same technology that controls mercury.

Power plants are the largest source of mercury in the U.S. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that damages the brain of the developing fetus and also increases the likelihood of heart attacks in adults. The reduction of other pollutants that are decreased when mercury emissions are controlled saves hundreds of lives annually and prevents thousands of asthma attacks, heart attacks and emergency room visits every year.

The final decision puts the health protections provided by MATS in jeopardy, and puts people who live in communities on the fence line of power plants at increased risk of illness. The burden will fall disproportionately on pregnant women, children and vulnerable adults in low-income communities and communities of color.

EPN MEMBERS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS AND ON THE RECORD STATEMENTS**Ellen Kurlansky, Former Air Policy Analyst, EPA Office of Air and Radiation*****Note: Ellen was instrumental in the development of the 2012 MATS***

“This action, which is a gift to the coal industry at the expense of all Americans, is an attack on public health justified by a phony cost-benefit analysis that purposely inflates the cost of MATS and ignores the value of the human health benefits. Based on that deception, EPA says that the benefits of MATS aren’t worth the cost. Those benefits include the value of thousands of lives saved by MATS each year, hundreds of thousands of illnesses avoided each year, and avoided damage to the developing brain of the unborn.”

Mustafa Santiago Ali, Former Assistant Associate Administrator, EPA Office of Environmental Justice

“In the middle of the most deadly pandemic in our lifetime, with people living in vulnerable communities who have been exposed to pollution dying at alarming rates due to chronic medical conditions precipitated by that pollution, the Trump Administration chooses now to undermine the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards? This is just one more example of Trump’s EPA inexplicably weakening a rule that reduces emissions of dangerous and deadly toxins for no other reason than to undo something the Obama Administration did to help our most vulnerable, including people of color, pregnant women and children, not to mention putting people in underserved communities even more at risk of dying from viruses like Covid-19. It’s unconscionable.”

ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION NETWORK

Founded in 2017, the [Environmental Protection Network](#) (EPN) harnesses the expertise of more than 500 former EPA officials to provide an informed and rigorous defense against efforts by the Trump administration to undermine EPA’s mission to protect public health and the environment.