

Comments from Harold Wimmer  
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EPA Public Hearing on Repeal of National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants: Coal- and  
Oil-Fired Electric Utility Steam Generating Units  
Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2018-0794  
As prepared for delivery

Good morning. My name is Harold Wimmer, and I am proud to serve as the President and CEO of the American Lung Association. The American Lung Association is the nation's oldest voluntary health organization, and our vision is a world free of lung disease. A key steppingstone toward achieving that mission is achieving clean air for all. I ask EPA to abandon this effort to repeal the updates to the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) that were finalized in 2024.

The American Lung Association has a long history of calling for pollution reduction, including stronger limits on mercury pollution and other air toxics from power plants. These pollutants harm the lungs as well as numerous other systems of the body. Mercury can harm health for anyone, but the particularly cruel thing about mercury is that it impacts babies. It can interfere with proper organ development, it can cause premature birth. Babies are not just little adults and their lungs are not just little lungs – they need extra care and a healthy environment in order to grow strong and healthy.

Back in 2011, when the EPA was first proposing standards on mercury and other harmful air toxics, the Lung Association became a leader among the health community in fighting for the strongest possible standards and defending them. And as the science and technology have evolved, we pushed EPA to strengthen them. We continue that fight up to this day.

That's because the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards work – and they work well. America's babies are healthier, and our air is cleaner, thanks to the standards that have already been implemented. Mercury air pollution from power plants declined more than 81 percent nationwide from 2011 when the MATS were first announced through 2017.

Even with the progress the nation has made, though, we know that power plant pollution is still a major health harm and the stronger MATS finalized last year are critical. The new standards will reduce dangerous emissions by tightening standards for non-mercury metals, improving health in communities near polluting plants. The rule also requires some of the dirtiest plants to meet the same emissions standards as other types of coal plants.

The updated MATS also include requirements for continuous monitoring of emissions. This commonsense, cost-effective change will ensure greater protection for nearby communities by assuring compliance with the pollution limits.

Additionally, Americans want stronger Mercury and Air Toxics Standards. Last year, a Lung Association found that 82% of voters support setting stricter limits on mercury and other toxic air emissions from power plants. This includes majority support across party and ideological lines. People want to breathe clean air, they want their kids and babies to grow up and live healthy, full lives.

But here's what won't make America healthier: rolling back life-saving standards on power plant pollution. Please prioritize and protect the health of Americans and keep these standards in place.