**Mercury Standards Message Guidance**

**BACKGROUND**

The Trump administration is preparing to move forward with Wheeler’s Poison Plan, [an attack on the Mercury and Air Toxic Standards,](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-epa-coal/trump-administration-reconsiders-rule-on-coals-mercury-pollution-idUSKCN1LE2TV) by sending a proposal to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that takes the first steps to roll back these lifesaving reductions in dangerous mercury, soot, and other toxic air pollutants released from coal- and oil-burning power plants. Wheeler’s scheme to increase toxic pollution that threatens our air, land, water, and wildlife is even opposed by industry – which is complying with the standards already.

**CORE MESSAGE**

President Trump and Acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler are moving forward with a Poison Plan that attacks Americans’ health, targeting restrictions on dangerous mercury and toxic pollution from power plants. Wheeler’s Poison Plan threatens to boost levels of mercury, soot, and other hazardous pollution into our air, water, food, and communities. Mercury pollution is particularly hazardous, endangering pregnant women and their babies and causing severe brain damage to those exposed to it. Even the power industry, which has already invested $18 billion dollars in cleaning up these dangerous and deadly pollutants, opposes this reckless plan. Wheeler’s plan jeopardizes their multi-billion-dollar investments and threatens to force Americans to breathe more toxic air pollution. Wheeler is paying off big time for the big coal companies he once lobbied for, at a significant cost to public health.

**TALKING POINTS**

* Trump’s EPA will be taking a first step to sabotage the Mercury and Air Toxic Standards, which are aimed at reducing dangerous levels of mercury, heavy metals, and other toxic air pollutants released from coal- and oil-burning power plants. Wheeler’s Poison Plan would have devastating health consequences for communities across the country, especially pregnant women and communities of color.
* Rolling back these lifesaving protections would be particularly detrimental to the health of pregnant women, infants, and children, as mercury pollution has been linked with damage to the brain, to the nervous system, and to fetal development.
* The reality is that this rollback has no benefits for anyone and it will only harm Americans’ health and pocketbooks. The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards were projected by EPA to annually avoid:
  + up to 11,000 premature deaths;
  + nearly 5,000 heart attacks;
  + 130,000 asthma attacks; and
  + 5,700 hospital and emergency room visits.
* Industry IS OPPOSED to rolling back the mercury pollution protections. The power industry has invested $18 billion in cleaning up these dangerous and deadly pollutants and is already meeting the standards. Any additional costs associated with rolling back these standards will be passed onto consumers, according to an industry letter to EPA air chief Bill Wehrum urging the Trump administration to leave these health protections in place.
* If undermining mercury and toxic pollution protections is bad for our health and bad for business, then who does it benefit? Wheeler, Wehrum, and Trump must come clean and explain to the American people how and why this attack is being mounted.