



Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

Senator Mary Jo White
Chairman

Patrick Henderson, Executive Director

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Letters to the Editor
The Scranton Times
149 Penn Avenue
Scranton, PA 18503

Dear Editor:

Your editorial (Deadly Emissions and Toxic Politics) is full of hot air.

I resent your statement that I introduced this bill in response to campaign contributions rather than the need for clean air, clean water and a sound economy. You don't know me or most of the sponsors, and to collectively question our motives because we have a different approach to reducing mercury emissions is outrageous.

You need to stop repeating misinformation, and start questioning why the logic for a state mercury rule just doesn't hold water. Pay attention to the two hearings over the next two weeks that my committee will hold.

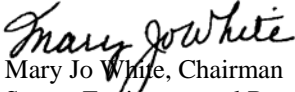
The United States is the only nation in the world to regulate mercury emissions. Pennsylvania generators must reduce emissions by 86%. But even if all power plants in the United States eliminated their mercury, it would only account for a 1% global reduction. That is because half of all mercury pollution comes from natural sources, like volcanoes and geysers, which don't respond well to government permits.

Moreover, the majority of mercury from man-made sources comes from Asia. Mercury in air circles the earth up to four times before being deposited in a waterway. Mercury poses no danger from inhalation – it must be ingested, and even then people must consume fish in extraordinary amounts before it could potentially pose a threat to human health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, women and children in the U.S. do not have mercury blood levels that would even pose an adverse health affect. In fact, contrary to your claims, there are no birth defects and developmental disorders in children that have been attributable to mercury exposure from power plants.

No one is saying “do nothing”. Senate Bill 1201 will require significant mercury reductions. The argument that Pennsylvania generators will simply purchase allowances from other states falls apart when you look at DEP's own data. Indeed, fully 90% of all generating capacity in Pennsylvania will have controls in place by 2015 to control SO₂, NO_x and mercury. The real question is why does DEP want to impose a more costly plan that will provide no added environmental benefit to Pennsylvanians and raise the cost of electricity for residents?

I urge your readers to follow the legislative hearings. They can review more information online at www.senatormjwhite.com. Please get the facts next time before condemning lawmakers again.

Sincerely,


Mary Jo White, Chairman
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& Energy Committee
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