



## Cement's Toxic Legacy: WASHINGTON

### CONGRESSIONAL ATTACKS ON HEALTH PROTECTIONS



Cement manufacturers are dumping their pollution into Washington communities with impunity. Lives are lost every year from this pollution, and our economy is forced to bear the burden of billions of dollars spent on hospital visits, lost days at work, and sick Washingtonians who are breathing this toxic air pollution.

In August 2010, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at last adopted strong air pollution protections for more than 100 cement making facilities across the country, bringing pollution controls for this industry into compliance with Clean Air Act requirements that have been on the books since 1990. The protections make significant cuts in mercury, soot and other dangerous air toxics. The EPA estimates that the pollution cuts from these updates will prevent up to **2,500 premature deaths each year and yield up to \$18 billion in health benefits.**

But some members of Congress don't value saving lives and money and instead are carrying the demands of huge multinational cement companies that want to avoid cleaning up their toxic legacy. **H.J. Res. 42** would block the EPA's new requirement that these cement plants finally control their toxic air pollution with state-of-the-art pollution control technologies. A list of Washington cement kilns and their emissions of toxic mercury pollution is below.<sup>1</sup>

Company	City	County	Kilns	Capacity (tons/yr)	Baseline Hg Emissions <sup>2</sup> (lbs/yr)
Ash Grove	Seattle	King	1/dry	675,000	58
Lafarge	Seattle	King	1/wet	381,000	65

### THE DANGERS OF MERCURY

Mercury poisoning is a serious threat to our health. While adults can have severe reactions to mercury poisoning – typically brought about by consumption of fish tainted with methylmercury, a highly toxic mercury compound – young children and unborn babies are

especially at risk. This is why women are strongly cautioned to avoid consumption of many kinds of fish before, during, or right after pregnancy. Exposure to methylmercury while still young or in the womb can have an irreversible impact on a child's development, including birth defects, brain damage, reduced IQ, and difficulty with reading, writing, and learning.

The EPA estimates that **more than 300,000 babies are born every year with an increased risk of learning disability due to *in utero* exposure to methylmercury.**<sup>3</sup> Cement plants are among the worst mercury polluters. The EPA's recently finalized health protections will reduce cement plants' mercury emissions by more than 90 percent – in addition to dramatic cuts in other pollutants that impact our health such as lead, acid gases, and soot. We urge you to defend these health protections from efforts by your colleagues to block them from ever taking effect. Washington moms are counting on it.



### FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

Because of mercury contamination, the Washington State Department of Health issued a statewide advisory that suggests young children and women who are nursing or are or might become pregnant should avoid eating northern pikeminnow altogether. The state also advises restrictions (no more than two meals per month) for large- and smallmouth bass. Restrictions on consumption of many Puget Sound fish also exist.<sup>4</sup>

CONTACT: Stephanie Maddin / Emily Enderle at Earthjustice (202) 667-4500

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<sup>1</sup> Data regarding company, city, number of kilns and capacity comes from the Portland Cement Association's "U.S. and Canadian Portland Cement Industry: Plant Information Summary," Dec. 31, 2008. Accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

<sup>2</sup> Emissions data come from U.S. EPA Impacts Worksheet for 40 CFR Parts 60 and 63 "National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants From the Portland Cement Manufacturing Industry." For further explanation of baseline mercury emissions, see p. 9 of the EPA's summary of environmental and cost impacts for the rule: [http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/pcem/summary\\_impacts.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/pcem/summary_impacts.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.epa.gov/hg/exposure.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/oehas/fish/consumpadvice.htm#Statewide>