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EPA Extends Public Comment on Mercury and Air Toxics Standards/Extension will have no impact on timeline for finalizing standards

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Contact Information: Enesta Jones, Jones.enesta@epa.gov, 202-564-7873, 202-564-4355

WASHINGTON -- In response to requests from members of Congress and to encourage additional public comment, EPA today extended the timeline for public input by 30 days on the proposed mercury and air toxics standards, an extension that will not alter the timeline for issuing the final standards in November 2011.

"EPA will put these long-overdue standards in effect in November, as planned. In our effort to be responsive to Congress and to build on the robust public comment process, we will extend the timeline for public input by 30 days, which will not impact the timeline for issuing the final standards," said Administrator Jackson. "These standards are critically important to the health of the American people and will leverage technology already in use at over half of the nation's coal power plants to slash emissions of mercury and other hazardous pollutants. When these new standards are finalized, they will assist in preventing 11,000 heart attacks, 17,000 premature deaths, 120,000 cases of childhood asthma symptoms and approximately 11,000 fewer cases of acute bronchitis among children each year. Hospital visits will be reduced and nearly 850,000 fewer days of work will be missed due to illness."

EPA proposed the first ever national mercury and air toxics standards in March. The standards will be phased in over three years, and states have the ability to give facilities a fourth year to comply. Currently, more than half of all coal-fired power plants already deploy widely available pollution control technologies that are called for to meet these important standards. Once they are final in November, these standards will ensure the remaining coal-fired plants, roughly 44 percent, take similar steps to decrease dangerous pollutants.

More information on the mercury and air toxics standards: <http://epa.gov/airquality/powerplanttoxics/>

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