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EPA Issues Final Standard to Protect Americans from Boilers' Toxic Air Pollution

Health protections will modestly reduce dangerous emissions

Washington, D.C. – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released a final health standard that will limit emissions of mercury, lead, arsenic, acid gases and other toxic pollutants from industrial boilers. This commonsense air toxics safeguard, often called the "Boiler MACT (Maximum Available Control Technology)," will save thousands of lives, and prevent thousands of cases of asthma attacks, heart attacks and hospital visits.

Industrial boilers are on-site power plants at places like universities and industrial facilities like chemical plants, refineries and paper mills. By controlling these plants' pollution, EPA's air toxics safeguard will protect Americans from breathing some of the most dangerous and toxic pollutants known to us – arsenic, lead, acid gases and mercury. Even in small amounts, these life-threatening air pollutants are linked to cancer, birth defects, brain damage and even early death. Without this critical protection, millions of tons of air toxics will continue to be released into our air each year.

"Corporate polluters are literally making us sick, and these long overdue protections from EPA will save lives and improve the health of millions of Americans," said Michael Brune, Executive Director of the Sierra Club. "Though the announcement today is modest by comparison to the proposals put forth by the EPA last June, we urge Administrator Lisa Jackson to forge ahead to protect our children and families' health."

Not content with having weakened important protections like the air toxics safeguard, polluting industries continue to push their agenda to roll back and even block public health protections and clean air standards.

"If the corporate lobbyists succeed in killing these health protections, Americans will pay the price with the lives and health of their family members," said James Pew, staff attorney at Earthjustice. "Controlling the toxic pollution from industrial boilers will save lives, prevent billions of dollars in unnecessary health care costs, and put thousands of Americans to work."

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