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Contact: Jared Saylor, Earthjustice (202) 667-4500, x213

**EPA Issues Plan to Curb Mercury, Dioxins and Other Toxic Pollutants from Power Plants**  
*National standard will prevent an estimated 17,000 premature deaths and 120,000 cases of childhood asthma symptoms*

Washington, D.C. – The following statement is from Earthjustice attorney James Pew on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s announcement today of plans to curb mercury, lead, dioxins and other toxic air pollutants from coal-fired power plants.

Earthjustice represented other environmental groups in successful litigation in federal court that challenged and overturned a weak standard for air toxic regulation adopted by the Bush administration. Mr. Pew argued that case in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Today’s announcement comes as a result of efforts by Earthjustice to establish a deadline for proposing this critical toxic air pollution standard.

“For decades, our nation’s dirtiest polluters have been able to pollute with impunity. Power plants are unrivaled sources of toxic air pollution, releasing thousands of tons dozens of dangerous, hazardous air pollutants such as mercury, lead, and dioxins into our air and our communities. This pollution leads to lung and heart disease, cancer, learning disorders and even death. According to the EPA’s own estimates, power plants are responsible for approximately 48 tons of mercury emitted annually. Mercury is a potent neurotoxicant that impairs a child’s ability to walk, talk, read, write and learn.

“Today, the EPA has finally begun the important process of protecting our lungs, hearts and children from power plant pollution. These pollution cuts will save approximately 17,000 lives every year, prevent 11,000 heart attacks annually and create thousands of new jobs. This positive step is what America needs to improve our health and protect our environment, all while guaranteeing an overall savings in health costs. According to a recent study conducted by Ceres and the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, the EPA’s rule for power plant pollution will bring hundreds of thousands of new jobs to the U.S. economy over the next five years.

“Today’s proposal to regulate these toxic air pollutants illustrates a commitment by the EPA to follow the law and protect public health. Every year, thousands of Americans die as a result of dirty air and unregulated pollution, and for years this tragedy has been ignored. The EPA must move forward with the strongest toxic air pollution limits for power plants and ensure protections for our health, our communities and our children.”

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