



CITIZENS
AGAINST

RUINING the
ENVIRONMENT

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Comments to the Illinois Pollution Control Board

Citizens Against Ruining the Environment – CARE is a grass roots organization in Lockport, IL.

CARE finds it appalling that local citizens must come before the IPC to beg for Health & Environmental Justice. It is also our expectation that you will Listen to the People and Not to the Polluting Industries & their lobbyists.

Many of us live within the fall zone from a “grandfathered” Coal Fired Power Plant in Romeoville. We also have a plant approx. 8 miles to the South as well as the 2 Coal plants in Chicago, approx 15-30 miles to our East. Needless to say, Asthma & lung diseases are prevalent in our immediate area.

As you know the Governor has approved several new plants to be built in IL utilizing IL coal, which is known to have an extremely high Sulphur content.

C.A.R.E. has attended several Public Hearings in protest of inferior pollution control standards for Coal Fired Power Plants as well as a Public Hearing for a new facility. We often hear comments from the IEPA that there is a shortage of MONEY & that they are understaffed. The IEPA also reverts to the USEPA for programs & answers.

The USEPA has been aware of Mercury since 1971 and has basically done nothing but create public awareness of the dangers. In 1998 your committee stated that it was “appropriate & necessary” to justify regulating power plants’ emissions of HAPs. The studies showed that mercury pollution causes severe health effects.

That was over 30 years ago. It is our understanding that in 2001 the EPA estimated that Coal Fired Power Plants could achieve an average of 90% Mercury reduction under Maximum Achievable Control Technologies - in approx 8 years. Had that concept been enacted, we would have 5 years left to a 90% Mercury reduction. Now, you are considering another extension for Mercury emissions for the year 2018? CARE believes that this is outrageous!

Do you have any idea of how many people have suffered, how many lives have been lost due to the extensions? Is there any wonder that Medical Insurance Rates have increased? Neurotoxins, asthma, lung disease! My sister-in-law died of emphysema, babies, children & seniors in our neighborhood, including my husband & I are using inhalers. Why?

As approx. 300,000 children are born each year with a heightened risk for neurological problems related to Mercury exposure -. Is there a necessity for more Neuroscientists & Neurologists in 2004 than in previous years?

When studies prove, or for that matter even insinuate, that industries such as coal power plants are creating harmful health & environment impacts – Why? – would there be ANY hesitation as to the Immediate establishment of the most Stringent Regulations & the most current technology available including Pilot Programs.

It's CARE's belief that the price of higher pollution control standards & costs of this technology to the Coal Fired Industry has an impact on your decisions. Is it better to have higher Medical Insurance Rates at the cost of human health and/or life?

If it's MONEY then the Coal Industry, as well as any polluting industries must realize that that is the Cost of Doing Business. Can a price be put on health or our environment? The cost of pollution controls should not be taken into consideration.

We have many other concerns, one of which is how averaging in combination with the credits effect the environment? We have been told by the IEPA that “averaging and credits are not used for problems where there are potential local impacts.” We would like to know how local impacts could possibly be avoided?

CARE is requesting that:

1. Immediate action be taken on Mercury;
2. The most stringent regulations for Mercury be applicable as required by the Clean Air Act;
3. Max standards for pollution controls be implemented for Mercury, Sulphur Dioxide and Nitrogen oxide releases;
4. CARE also requests a complete toxic air quality study that would encompass communities such as Lockport that are within close proximity to these facilities & similar polluting industries.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our concerns. We truly hope that you Listen to the People !

Our group has been very concerned about the coal fired power plants here in Romeoville and Joliet, and have consistently fought for updated pollution controls with other environmental organizations such as Illinois PIRG, Chicago Legal Clinic, ELPC, American Lung, Sierra Club and many others.

This past February, Ellen Rendulich another C.A.R.E. Director and I assisted the Sierra Club at the Southwest Chicago 23rd annual Fishing and Boating Show in Lockport. We met with many people that day while handing out literature. As the day wore on, one thing became alarmingly apparent and that was that approximately 20-30 % of the fishermen we spoke to were NOT aware that consuming fish from Illinois waterways could be hazardous to them or their loved ones. Some fishermen were not even aware that Mercury in fish was an issue here. What surprised

Ellen and I the most, was that after all these years of media attention, on radio, television and in the newspapers, there were still some people totally unaware that mercury could pose a threat to them.

The twenty-one coal-fired power plants in Illinois are a threat to them, and to every citizen living here in Illinois. They are the single largest source of in-state mercury emissions, emitting more than all other human activities combined. One of the highest mercury concentrations of sampled fish is right here in Will County. That location is the Monee Reservoir ranked #2 in the state. Another startling ranking is Lake Renwick at #14 for sampled fish with higher than normal mercury concentrations. One fish sample from Lake Renwick showed .35 ppm (parts per million) when .13 is considered safe. This is nearly 3 times the safe limit. What is most disturbing about the Lake Renwick statistics is that we just recently learned that many of the fishermen here actually do NOT practice "Catch and Release" at this site, and instead are consuming the toxic fish.

In March 2006, IEPA submitted to the Illinois Pollution Control Board a strong proposal to eliminate 90 percent of mercury emissions from these plants by 2009. Since the Midwest Generation Plant in Joliet is ranked #3 in the state and the Will County Plant, behind us here is ranked #7, we feel this would be a great place to start that 90 % Reduction plan.

Citizens Against Ruining the Environment

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