



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAY 18 2011

OFFICE OF
AIR AND RADIATION

Mr. Lee B. Zeugin
Hunton & Williams LLP
1900 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006-1109

Dear Mr. Zeugin:

Thank you for your letter of May 6, 2011, to Administrator Jackson regarding the Utility Air Regulatory Group's identification of discrepancies in the way historical mercury emissions data were recalculated and used in establishing the mercury maximum achievable control technology (MACT) floor in the proposed Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) rule. We have revised these mercury calculations and will include them in the docket this week to ensure that this information is publicly available. We do not expect this change to have any appreciable impact on the controls that will be needed for compliance or on the analyses underlying the proposal.

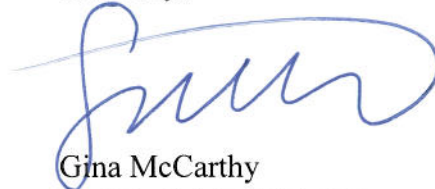
We recognize that your primary concern involves the mercury limit for existing coal power plants. The revised calculations result in a slight increase of that limit, from 1.0 to 1.2 pounds per trillion British thermal units. We estimate that this change will lessen our expected mercury reductions by about half of a ton, not changing our projected 90 percent reduction from the mercury in the coal used by power plants.

We remain committed to following the law and sound science and providing, in a timely way, the public health protections required by the Clean Air Act. Toxic air pollutants like mercury from coal- and oil-fired power plants have been shown to cause neurological damage, including lower IQ, in children exposed in the womb and during early development. The proposed standards, as you are aware, also address emissions of other toxic metals linked with cancer, such as arsenic, chromium, and nickel. Mercury and many of the other toxic pollutants also damage the environment and pollute our nation's lakes, streams, and fish. In addition, cutting these toxic pollutants also reduces fine particle pollution, which causes premature death, heart disease, and workdays lost to illness and asthma.

Your letter also noted other possible discrepancies regarding aspects of our calculations. As we move forward to develop the final rule, I can assure you that we will fully consider these and any other comments you provide during the comment period. As usual, we will continue to update the docket as comments come in.

If you have further questions regarding this proposed rule, please contact Bill Maxwell of my staff at (919) 541-5430.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gina McCarthy', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Gina McCarthy
Assistant Administrator