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CLEAN AIR: MERCURY AND AIR TOXICS fact sheet



MARCH 2012

REQUEST:

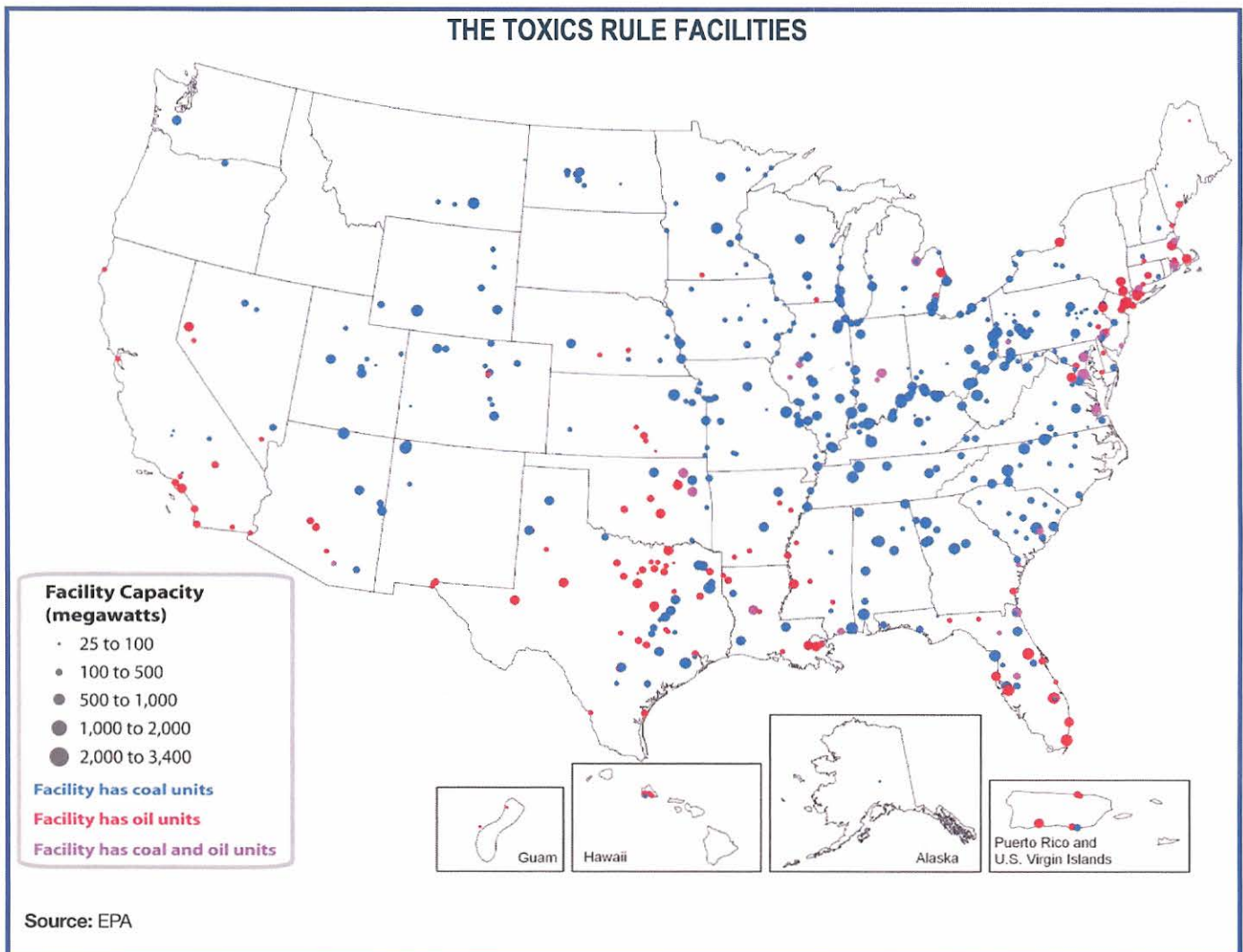
The American Thoracic Society urges Congress to allow EPA to move forward with implementation of the Mercury and Air Toxics Standard (MATS). Vote “NO” on any proposal to stop, weaken or delay the EPA MATS.

BACKGROUND

Mercury, a common air pollutant from power plants, is a powerful neurotoxin causing neurological and cognitive deficits in prenatal and young children. The damage caused by mercury is permanent. Power plants also emit a range of other toxic substances including arsenic, nickel, chromium and acid gases. These metals and acid gases have known serious adverse health effects.

While 16 states have taken steps to reduce mercury pollution, there are no national limits on mercury and other toxic emissions. In 1990, Congress passed legislation directing EPA to issue national limits on mercury and air toxic emissions. After years of delay, EPA has finally issued a rule to address mercury and air toxics emission.

THE TOXICS RULE FACILITIES





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HEALTH BENEFITS VS COMPLIANCE COSTS

When fully implemented in 2016, this rule will have significant health benefits that far exceed compliance costs. Businesses are expected to spend \$9.6 billion to comply with the rule, while the public is expected to enjoy \$37-\$90 billion in health benefits each year.

TECHNOLOGY EXISTS TO ACHIEVE MERCURY REDUCTIONS

Today, pollution control technology exists to meet the mercury air toxic standards. The MATS rule is known as a technology-based standard. In setting the standard, EPA looked at the emissions from the top 12% of best controlled sources and required other facilities to adopt pollution control technologies to meet the standard. Today, over 50% of power plants already have installed pollution control equipment that complies with the standard.

This rule will require all power plants to adopt similar pollution control measures.

The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards Will Prevent:	Once Implemented (cases each year)
Premature Death	Up to 11,000
Chronic Bronchitis	2,800
Heart Attacks	4,700
Asthma Attacks	130,000
Hospital and Emergency Room Visits	5,700
Restricted Activity Days	3,200,000

This chart shows the health benefits of the final standards to reduce mercury and other air toxics emissions from power plants

State	Final Policy Benefits: Adult Mortality	State	Final Policy Benefits: Adult Mortality	State	Final Policy Benefits: Adult Mortality
Alabama	360	Louisiana	290	North Dakota	19
Arizona	35	Maine	20	Ohio	560
Arkansas	250	Maryland	220	Oklahoma	300
California	14	Massachusetts	130	Oregon	12
Colorado	140	Michigan	410	Pennsylvania	530
Connecticut	90	Minnesota	150	Rhode Island	29
Delaware	32	Mississippi	240	South Carolina	330
DC	15	Missouri	410	South Dakota	27
Florida	730	Montana	8	Tennessee	370
Georgia	490	Nebraska	72	Texas	1200
Idaho	6	Nevada	10	Utah	22
Illinois	570	New Hampshire	25	Vermont	10
Indiana	290	New Jersey	320	Virginia	300
Iowa	160	New Mexico	24	Washington	31
Kansas	160	New York	440	West Virginia	96
Kentucky	210	North Carolina	480	Wisconsin	220
				Wyoming	6
				Totals:	1100

bold = states with state-based mercury control programs
Source: EPA, National Association of Clean Air Agencies