Date

To the Editor

This fall, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will make a decision that could have an enormous impact on the health of women and children. After years of delay, EPA is facing a court-ordered deadline to issue rules to reduce the dangers of a very toxic chemical: mercury.

Mercury’s effects on the central nervous system are comparable to those of lead, causing severe neurological and developmental problems, especially to children and fetuses. Humans are, in large part exposed to mercury when they eat fish contaminated with mercury.

Here in Missouri, the fish in many of our rivers and lakes are so contaminated by mercury pollution that we are warned not to eat the fish or else risk our health. In 2002, Missouri had posted health warnings for mercury covering 288,315 lake acres and 51,015 miles of rivers and streams.

One major reason for this problem is that power plants, which are the largest industrial source of mercury pollution, are totally unregulated.

But right now the EPA could do something about that. The Clean Air Act states that the EPA must set standards that require power plants to install the maximum available pollution control technologies to protect the public health, and technology currently exists to reduce mercury emissions by 90%.

Unfortunately, President Bush is being urged by lobbyists from the coal and electric industries to ignore the law and propose weak standards.

The President should protect women and children by setting tough mercury standards, and not let big dirty power plants rewrite our clean air rules to avoid cleaning up their pollution.

Sincerely,

Name
Address
Phone Number