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ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN: UPHOLD EPA'S MERCURY EMISSIONS STANDARDS

Mercury Emissions Endanger Children and Pose Threats to Public Health

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today joined Massachusetts and 10 other states in defending the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) that seek to reduce mercury emissions from electric power plants. The standards are under appeal in federal court.

"It is well known that mercury emissions pose serious health risks, especially to vulnerable populations such as children, pregnant and nursing women, and older people," said Attorney General Madigan. "The EPA's emissions standards provide critical safeguards for our communities that must be allowed to stand."

The motion to intervene was filed today by the Massachusetts Attorney General's office in the federal appeals court of the District of Columbia. The Attorneys General of Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont joined Madigan in signing on to the motion. The District of Columbia and New York City also joined the action.

The EPA issued the MATS rule in response to an order from the same federal appeals court in 2008 that ruled that the EPA's 2005 attempt to address mercury and air toxics emissions from coal- and oil-fired power plants inadequately protected public health under the Clean Air Act. In February, some industry groups challenged the EPA's standards, which are aimed at reducing mercury emissions by 90 percent through the implementation of technology already used in the industry. Today's motion seeks permission from the appeals court to allow the states to intervene and defend MATS.

Attorney General Madigan has been a leading proponent of strict enforcement of rules and regulations regarding mercury. Illinois has several coal-fired electric power plants within its borders, including several in and around Chicago that are required to address mercury emissions under state multi-pollutant standards.

Environmental and Energy Counsel James Gignac is handling the case for Madigan's office.

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