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April 18, 2019

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Administrator Wheeler,

I write to urge you to withdraw the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) December 27, 2018 proposal that undermines the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) rule that is already implemented by coal burning plants and utility companies across the nation. Undermining the current MATS rule could jeopardize recent gains in health benefits, especially for our most vulnerable, and creates unnecessary changes in regulations. Additionally, undermining the rule could increase mercury contamination of our food supply, namely fish stock.

The EPA's refusal to monetize indirect benefits and the devaluation of direct benefits in a benefit-cost analysis under the redetermination of "appropriate and necessary" in Clean Air Act section 112(n)(1)(A) is short-sighted and flawed. Such action is likely to erode the rule and roll back years of progress without significant foreseeable benefit to either the utility industry or the general public.

The MATS rule has been implemented by the utility industry nationwide, lowering smog, soot and toxic air pollution dramatically and ushering in cleaner energy. The EPA should not disrupt the nation's power sector with regulatory uncertainty by undermining the commitments they have made and the costs they have incurred to comply with the current MATS rule.

Further, the implementation of this rule protects the health of many of the most vulnerable members of our community. As a pro-life Member of Congress I bring this issue before you for careful consideration as the negative health impacts of mercury exposure, especially to pregnant women, babies and young children are well documented and truly detrimental.

Finally, we must look at the impact mercury exposure has on our food supply. In my state of Florida, methylmercury contamination in fish is well documented. The Florida Department of Health publishes a monthly fish consumption guide. The most recent guide continues to list several freshwater and saltwater fish across the state either as unsafe to eat or safe only when

consumed in extremely limited amounts. Mercury is a long-lasting contaminant that takes years to rid from the ecosystem and to meet consumption safety guidelines. For both economic and health reasons, any threat to the MATS rule may be detrimental. We should not jeopardize the progress that has been made in making our air, water and fish safer.

For all these reasons, I urge you to withdraw this harmful proposal and uphold the EPA's prior determination that it remains "appropriate and necessary" to reduce hazardous air pollution from coal- and oil-fired power plants using the effective tools provided by Congress in section 112 of the Clean Air Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Francis Rooney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

Francis Rooney
Member of Congress