

EPA COAL PLANT WATER POLLUTION STANDARDS

TOXIC METALS IN OUR WATER

Every year, coal-fired power plants dump millions of tons of toxic metals into our waterways. In fact, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, **more than half of all toxic water pollution in the country comes from coal-fired power plants**, making coal plants the number one source of toxic water pollution in the U.S.¹ What's more, 4 out of 5 coal plants in the U.S. have no limits on the amount of toxics they are allowed to dump into our water.²

Coal plants across the country are disposing of toxic heavy metals like arsenic, selenium, boron, cadmium, mercury, and lead in our waterways, polluting our drinking water, fishing areas, and local rivers and streams. Research has shown that exposure to these dangerous chemicals can lead to birth defects, cancer, and even death—meaning that limiting these pollutants will not only clean up our water, but will also save lives.

The existing standards governing water pollution from power plants have not been updated in 30 years.

The Environmental Protection Agency has repeatedly acknowledged that the existing guidelines have not kept pace with developments in the industry and the current standards fail to address the worst pollutants that are dumped into our water.

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But good news is on the way. This spring, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed new coal plant water pollution standards to limit the amount of toxic metals that can be dumped in the water. These water pollution limits—also referred to as Effluent Limitation Guidelines—will, for the first time, set national standards that limit the amount of toxic metals that is dumped in our waterways. These standards will also require all coal plants to monitor and

report the amount of pollution dumped into the water, giving us detailed information for the first time about the types and amounts of dangerous chemicals in our water.

The Environmental Protection Agency's strongest proposed approach is common-sense, affordable, and is already being used by some coal plants. **Limiting the amount of toxics in our water will save lives, prevent children from getting sick, and ensure our water is safe to drink and our fish safe to eat.**



GET INVOLVED

These critical new standards will help save lives, clean up our waterways, and will ultimately help protect our planet from ever-worsening climate disruption. But the coal industry is already mounting a well-organized and well-financed campaign to pressure the Environmental Protection Agency to weaken this important safeguard. That's why we need your help!

Submit a comment to the Environmental Protection Agency and President Obama telling them you support these new safeguards for toxic water pollution from coal plants.

Visit action.sierraclub.org/wastewater to learn more, get involved and take action in support of these critical new standards.

¹ http://water.epa.gov/scitech/wastetech/guide/steam-electric/upload/proposed_factsheet.pdf

² Analysis of EPA data

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