

Trump's EPA Says Obama's Mercury Limits On Coal Plants Not Necessary

The EPA says the federal rules imposed by Obama's administration to limit mercury and other toxic emissions from coal- and oil-fired power plants are too costly to justify, and are not "appropriate and necessary." For now, the EPA has not done away with the 2012 restrictions because utility companies have already spent billions of dollars to comply with the standards. But the result could set a precedent for other environmental pollution, and it enables coal mining companies to challenge the restrictions in court.

It drastically changed the formula the government uses in its required cost-benefit analysis of the regulation by taking into account only certain effects that can be measured in dollars, while ignoring or playing down other health benefits." – NY Times

"It will make it much more difficult for the government to justify environmental regulations in many cases." – Robert N. Stavins, professor of environmental economics at Harvard University

When coal is burned it releases mercury into the air. Mercury causes health risks including neurological disorders, heart and lung problems, and can lead to autoimmune diseases and birth defects. In the new proposal, Trump's EPA estimates the cost of compliance to be between \$7.4 billion and \$9.6 billion annually while the benefits are only \$4 million to \$6 million a year. But the Obama administration calculated that the cleaner air would prevent up to 11,000 premature deaths each year and save about \$85 billion a year in health

costs due to the decrease of mercury, particulate matter, and other toxic pollutants.