



Congressional Support is Needed to Encourage the EPA to Implement Proposed Cement Kiln Air Standards

The EPA has proposed a rule for cement kilns that would create emission standards for mercury, hydrochloric acid, chromium, and other toxic pollutants. This would lead to cleaner air, healthier people and clean job creation while reducing adverse impacts on people and natural resources. The EPA has the regulatory authority to do this under the Clean Air Act. EPA should follow through with the proposed rule as it will cut air pollutants substantially.

There are more than 150 cement kilns in the United States. These kilns are some of the largest emitters of mercury each year, emitting nearly 23,000 pounds a year (just 1/70th a teaspoon can contaminate a 25 – acre lake and render the fish in the lake unsafe to eat), as they cook thousands of tons of rock to more than 2,600 degrees Fahrenheit. Both the rock and the coal burned contain mercury and other toxic pollutants, which is vaporized during the burning process.

EPA's Proposed Reductions:

- *Mercury*: 11,600 to 16,250 pounds per year, or a reduction of 81% to 93%
- *Total hydrocarbons*: 11,670 to 13,900 tons, or a reduction of 75%
- *Particulate matter*: 10,500 to 13,600 tons, or a reduction of 90% to 96%
- *Hydrochloric acid*: 2,800 to 3,600 tons, or a reduction of 92% to 94%
- *Sulfur dioxide*: 135,700 to 160,000 tons, or a reduction of 77% to 90%



Above: J.A Vitovsky Elementary School adjacent to local cement kiln in Midlothian, Texas.

Benefits:

- **Reduce threat of deadly pollution:** EPA estimates 620 to 1,600 premature deaths will be avoided each year.
- **Cleaner air = better health:** Cleaner air means fewer hospital visits, fewer sick days, fewer respiratory illnesses and fewer bad air days.
- **Financial benefits outweigh costs:** The EPA estimates that benefits will range from \$4.4 billion to \$11 billion in savings annually in 2013. These savings far outweigh the costs that the EPA estimates to the cement industry for this rule: \$222 million to \$684 million annually in 2013.
- **A cleaner, greener economy:** New, cleaner jobs will decrease air pollution while creating jobs installing clean air technologies at cement kilns across the country.

Myths:

- **There isn't time for the cement industry to comply with this proposal:** The compliance date won't be until 2013, and any claim by the industry that this plan to cut air pollution will also cut jobs is unfounded.
- **It's so expensive that cement will have to be imported from China, costs will rise significantly for the consumer, etc:** \$222 million to \$684 million annually in 2013 is a small cost to the cement industry.
- **Technology needs to be created:** There is technology available right now that cement kilns can install to limit mercury, particulate matter, hydrochloric acid and benzene pollution immediately – cutting thousands of tons of toxic air pollution.

Hazards Associated with Emitted Pollutants:

- *Mercury* is a dangerous neurotoxin that can seriously harm all people, especially pregnant mothers and young children. Mercury can impair a child's ability to walk, talk, read, write and learn. It also interferes with the brain and nervous system, can affect blood pressure, fertility and cause memory loss and tremors.
- *Particulate matter* is a major contributor to asthma and other respiratory illness. Cutting particulate matter pollution from cement kilns will result in fewer asthma-related illnesses and a cleaner, healthier environment.
- *Total hydrocarbons* are a precursor to ground level ozone, a serious air pollutant and key component of smog. A number of hydrocarbons are also considered toxic, meaning they can cause cancer or other health problems.

For more information:

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