



Statement Regarding New Mercury Findings

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The new study by the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio shows a link between mercury emissions from industry and increased rates of autism. Coal burning power plants are a major source of mercury in Texas, and the emissions from the existing coal plants should be reduced. Additional coal plants should not be built. Texas continues to be the worst in the nation for coal plant emissions, with **11,004 pounds of mercury and mercury compounds reported in the EPA's Toxic Release Industry (TRI).**

The study found that for every 1000 pounds of mercury released by Texas power plants in 1998, there was a corresponding 3.7% increase in autism rates in Texas school districts in 2002. Furthermore, the prevalence of autism lessened 1% to 2% for every ten miles from the source of the mercury pollution.

We must act to protect the health of our children. We must prevent neurological impacts from mercury. We must prevent autism.

No one should have to suffer the devastating impacts of autism because of electrical generation. There are many clean ways to generate power, and energy efficiency can make additional coal plants unnecessary. Many coal plants are being cancelled around the country, but TCEQ doesn't seem to understand the problem.

The Oak Grove 1 and 2 coal plants proposed by the former TXU were issued a permit by the TCEQ even though administrative law judges recommended denial. The permit is now on appeal. **Oak Grove would emit 1440 pounds of additional mercury every year, even though the nation as a whole is attempting to get down to 15 tons per year.** This amount is more than would have been produced by all *eight* of TXU's cancelled plants combined (1280 pounds of mercury/year.)

Recently permitted coal plants and permitted mercury emissions: (plants not yet operating)

CPS Spruce 2, San Antonio – 140 pounds/year

Sandy Creek, Riesel, near Waco – 150 pounds/ year – on appeal

Formosa Plastics, Calhoun County – 78 pounds/year

TXU's Sandow 5, Rockdale – 192 pounds/year

TXU's Oak Grove, Franklin – 1440 pounds/year

Calhoun County Navigation District, Point Comfort – 14 pounds

Proposed plants: NRG's Limestone 3, Jewett – 140 pounds/year

Coletto Creek, near Goliad - 132 pounds/year

Tenasca, Sweetwater – 400 pounds/year (in application at this time)

Twin Oaks (Sempra PNM), Robertson County – 860 pounds per year

Potential increase – 3546 pounds/year coal plant mercury emissions