

### Volume 266 December 27, 2011

The Obama administration has adopted tough new limits on mercury and other toxic emissions from power plants, winning praise from environmentalists and public health advocates but sparking warnings from industry groups that contend the new regulations are too expensive and will place dangerous pressure on the nation's electrical grid.

The update to the Clean Air Act comes after a relentless 20-year battle in Washington. It marks the first time the Environmental Protection Agency has curbed power plant emissions of mercury, a known neurotoxin that can be profoundly harmful to children and pregnant women. The administration said cutting mercury in the air could prevent as many as 11,000 premature deaths a year.

The announcement marks a strategic shift for the Obama administration, which had labored to mute industry and Republican complaints that environmental rules kill jobs, culminating in a decision this summer to halt standards to cut smog. Since then, the administration has moved to reassure its voter base of its commitment to the environment, most notably by delaying a decision on a controversial oil pipeline from Canada to the Gulf Coast.

The Keystone XL pipeline decision and now the mercury rule are political gambles for President Obama, since Republican challengers could push the jobs argument in crucial coal-reliant states like Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania.

Obama put himself squarely behind the mercury decision, releasing a short video in which he underscored the fact that President George H.W. Bush had signed the "bold and necessary" law authorizing the EPA to reduce toxic substances in the air in 1990.

"Over the years, the law was never fully implemented. Special-interest groups kept delaying the process," Obama said. "Today my administration is saying, 'Enough.' We are announcing new, common-sense, cost-effective standards to dramatically reduce harmful air pollution."

Industry lobbyists and congressional Republicans, who have fought vigorously to halt new clean-air rules, warned of rolling blackouts and massive layoffs in the energy sector if the regulations were implemented. Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.) vowed to introduce legislation to halt the mercury rule when Congress returns after the holiday break. Under the new rule, power plants can emit 1.2 pounds of mercury per million BTUs of energy produced. The industry had sought a higher limit, 1.4 pounds. But the EPA arrived at its figure based on a formula set out under the Clean Air Act, and analysts said the agency could not deviate from it. The rule would remove 90% of the mercury spewing into the air, the EPA said.

### Electricity Pricing Areas – Dec 27, 2011

#### January

On-Peak	Per kWh
Cinergy	\$ .03423
PJM West	\$ .04265

### ComEd Average Day Ahead LMP Electric Price

Time Period	Average per Kwh
Dec 1–Dec 31, 2010	\$ .03545
Jan 1 –Jan 31, 2011	\$ .03871
Feb 1 – Feb 28	\$ .03581
March 1- Mar 31	\$ .03668
April 1 – April 30	\$ .03448
May1- May 31	\$ .03954
June 1 - June 30	\$ .03851
July 1 thru July 31	\$ .05170
Aug 1 – Aug 31	\$ .04064
Sep 1 - Sep 30	\$ .03058
Oct 1- Oct31	\$ .02968
Nov 1- Nov 30	\$ .02816
Dec 1 – Dec 26	\$ .02971

**Weather Today:** Rain and snow showers this morning. Cloudy and windy this afternoon. Temps nearly steady in the mid to upper 30s. Winds NW at 20 to 30 mph. Chance of precip 40%. **Tonight:** Partly cloudy skies with gusty winds. Low near 25F. Winds NNW at 20 to 30 mph. **Wed:** Partly cloudy. High 36F. Winds WSW at 10 to 15 mph. **Thu:** Cloudy. Highs in the mid 40s and lows in the upper 30s. **Fri:** Morning clouds followed by afternoon sun. Highs in the mid 40s and lows in the upper 30s. **Sat:** More sun than clouds. Highs in the upper 40s and lows in the low 40s.

