

New US anti-pollution standards draw industry fire

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The Department of Water and Power (DWP) San Fernando Valley Generating Station is seen in Sun Valley, California, 2011. US health campaigners Wednesday hailed the announcement of new anti-pollution standards for American manufacturers, but industry leaders condemned the rules for being costly and overly aggressive.

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The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said the first national standards to control power plant emissions of mercury and toxic [air pollution](#) would prevent up to 11,000 [premature deaths](#) and 4,700 heart attacks annually.

"The standards will also help America's children grow up healthier -- preventing 130,000 cases of childhood [asthma symptoms](#) and about 6,300 fewer cases of acute bronchitis among children each year," an EPA statement said.

However, the National Association of Manufacturers said the government agency had "finalized one of the most costly regulations that will do more damage to our economy and job growth."



A view of downtown Los Angeles, California, is seen on a smoggy afternoon in 2006. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said the first national standards to control power plant emissions of mercury and toxic air pollution would prevent up to 11,000 premature deaths and 4,700 heart attacks annually.

"In 2015 alone, Utility MACT will cost \$11.4 billion," said NAM President Jay Timmons, referring to the rules, which he claimed typified the EPA's "overly aggressive agenda that is harming manufacturers' ability to compete."

"Utility companies have made clear that they will be forced to shut down power generation plants throughout the country, and the reliability of the power grid will be threatened if this rule is implemented," he added.

But the American Lung Association welcomed the EPA standards, which also target toxic air pollution from arsenic, acid gas, nickel, selenium, and cyanide, and described the new regulations as "long overdue."

"Since toxic air pollution from [power plants](#) can make people sick and cut lives short, the new Mercury and Air Toxics Standards are a huge victory for public health," said Dr Albert Rizzo, the group's National Volunteer Chair.

"The Lung Association expects all oil and coal-fired power plants to act now to protect Americans, especially our children, from the health risks posed by these dangerous air pollutants," added Rizzo, a pulmonary and critical care specialist.

The regulations stem from the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments, which placed tighter anti-pollution standards on power plants. Companies, however, have been fighting the legislation ever since.

The country's Natural Resources Defense Council also praised the new rules.

"After decades of industry-induced delay, the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) did exactly what it was designed to do: look out for our health and our environment," said Frances Beinecke, the group's president.

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