April 17, 2019

Administrator Andrew Wheeler  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Wheeler,

As faith leaders from a broad spectrum of religious traditions, we write to urge you to not weaken the Environmental Protection Agency’s Mercury and Air Toxic Standards. Faith traditions teach us the importance not only of protecting God’s creation from environmental hazards like mercury pollution, but also urge us to care for vulnerable populations.

Mercury pollution disproportionately impacts people of color and lower income families and has devastating impacts on children and pregnant women including damage to developing lungs, kidneys, heart and brain. Because of mercury pollution’s impact to human health and especially vulnerable populations, we are compelled to speak out against any weakening of the mercury pollution standards.

The current standards have been instrumental in reducing dangerous mercury and other toxic air pollutants released from coal and oil burning power plants. As projected by your own agency, the mercury standards avoid up to 11,000 premature deaths, 5,000 heart attacks and 130,000 asthma attacks each year.

Mercury pollution standards should not discount human health or limit co-benefits in the cost-benefit analysis. We support the 2003 guidelines issued by the George W. Bush Administration that work to protect human health. The standards should put the wellbeing of vulnerable communities and all of God’s creation at the forefront.

We believe that weakening the mercury standards does not fulfill EPA’s mission to protect human health and the environment and will not protect the common good. The current Mercury and Air Toxic Standards help us care for God’s creation and should not be weakened.

Sincerely,

Rev. Jessica Abell  
Founding Pastor  
Living Waters Community Church of Denver

Jeffrey S. Allen  
West Virginia Council of Churches  
Charleston, WV
Rabbi Katy Z. Allen  
Jewish Climate Action Network Massachusetts  
Ma’yan Tikvah

Shantha Ready Alonso  
Executive Director  
Creation Justice Ministries

Peter Bakken  
Coordinator  
Wisconsin Interfaith Power Y Light

Rebecca Blachly, M.Div.  
Director of Government Relations  
The Episcopal Church

Rev. Anna Blaedel  
United Methodist Elder  
Director, Wesley Center at the University of Iowa

Sr. Joan Brown OSF  
Executive Director  
New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light

Cassandra Carmichael  
Executive Director  
National Religious Partnership for the Environment

Patrick Carolan  
Executive Director  
Franciscan Action Network

Rev. Dr. Christopher Carter  
United Methodist Elder and Assistant Professor of Theology  
University of San Diego

Marianne Comfort  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas’ Institute Justice Team

Rev. Dr. Jennifer Copeland  
Executive Director, NC Council of Churches  
United Methodist Clergy

Carol Devine  
Green Chalice  
Disciples Home Mission
Rev. Dr. Timothy Eberhart  
Assistant Professor of Theology and Ecology  
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Rabbi Sam Feinsmith  
Skokie Valley Agudath Jacob Synagogue  
Skokie, IL

Dr. Mirele B. Goldsmith  
Jewish Climate Action Network-DC

Rabbi Lisa Grant  
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

Rev. Dr. H. William Gregory  
United Church of Christ retired pastor  
Yarmouth, Maine

Rabbi Steve Gutow  
Visiting Scholar at NYU’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and Immediate past chair of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment

Rev. Susan Hendershot  
President  
Regeneration Project  
Interfaith Power & Light

Glenda Hill  
United Methodist  
Flagstaff, Arizona

Rev. Dr. Douglas B. Hunt  
Board Member  
Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth

Rev. Mark David Johnson, MDiv, STM  
Pastor, Emanuel Lutheran Church, New Brunswick NJ

Rev. Dr. Dong Hyeon Jeong, PhD  
United Methodist Church  
Southwest Philippine Annual Conference

Dr. Laurel Kearns  
Associate Professor  
Drew University
Rev. Richard Killmer
Retired Presbyterian minister
Yarmouth, Maine

Sarah Withrow King
co-director
CreatureKind

Sarah King
Former chair
Arizona Faith Network

Avery Davis Lamb
Interfaith Power & Light
Washington, DC

Rev. Ken Brooker Langston
Disciples Center for Public Witness

Rev. Greg Davison Laszakovits
Pastor
Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren

Dr. Hyo-Dong Lee
Associate Professor
Drew University Theological School

Scott Lewis
Higher Ground Initiative
Temple Solel, Hollywood, FL

The Rev. Dr. Russell L. Meyer
Executive Director
Florida Council of Churches

Rev. Abby Mohaupt
Moderator
Fossil Free Presbyterian Church USA

Mary Elizabeth Moore
Dean and Professor of Theology and Education
Boston University School of Theology

Beth Norcross
Executive Director
The Center for Spirituality in Nature

Rev. Kerri Parker
Executive Director
Wisconsin Council of Churches

Rev. Jenny Phillips
Creation Care Program Manager
General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church

Rev. David Radcliff
Executive Director
New Community Project

Bonny Rodden
President
Maine Council of Churches

Terra Schwerin Rowe, PhD
Assistant Professor
Philosophy and Religion Department
University of North Texas

Nigel S. Savage
President & CEO
Hazon

Rev. Peter Sawtell
Executive Director
Eco-Justice Ministries, Denver, Colorado

Rev. Katie Sexton
Executive Director
Arizona Faith Network

Ann Scholz, SSND, PhD
Associate Director for Social Mission
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

David K. Shumate
District Executive Minister
Virlina District Board - Church of the Brethren, Inc.
Rev. Sandy Sorenson
Director, Washington Office
United Church of Christ

Rabbi Daniel Swartz
Executive Director
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
Pennsylvania

Mark Terwilliger
Pastor, Countryside Community Church, a United Methodist Fellowship
Clarks Summit, PA

Susannah Tuttle
Director, Interfaith Power and Light
North Carolina Council of Churches

Emily Wirzba
Legislative Representative, Sustainable Energy & Environment
Friends Committee on National Legislation

Melody Zhang
Sojourners
Rochester Hills, Michigan