



Protecting the environment and working for a healthy community.

**Press Statement by Emmett Pepper
Program Coordinator, Citizens Campaign for the Environment
October 10, 2006, Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY**

I would first like to thank members of the press for coming out today for this very important issue.

My name is Emmett Pepper, and I am a Program Coordinator for Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE).

Over the last few weeks, CCE has been conducting a large-scale, statewide campaign on mercury pollution reductions, educating the public on the important dangers that power plant emissions pose to our health and local ecosystem. We have found overwhelming support from the mainstream public for reducing Mercury emissions as soon as possible.

This banner is just a fraction of over 5,000 signatures that CCE has collected in support of a quicker timetable for reducing mercury. We have also generated over 1,000 hand-written letters to the Department of Environmental Conservation, sending a clear message that the people of New York State feel strongly that we need robust protection from mercury pollution.

I want to, briefly, read a couple of excerpts from letters written to the DEC. An employee at a hospital in Warsaw, NY said “[M]others are taught to eat right, less fat, etc., which ... means turning to our fish supply. If our own fish supply is not safe now, what is?” A grandmother from Massapequa writes “I have a 10 year old grandson who has been effected by mercury. He has low muscle tone and very bad speech. He can not play ball with boys his own age. He has difficulty riding a bike. His motor skills are limited. We worry about his future.” A woman from Kings Park, Long Island, whose child drew pictures of fish and nature on her letter wrote: “I realize that I am just one voice that is concerned for her children’s future, but I would hope that my voice counts. If you have it in your power to reduce the amount of mercury that is contaminating our seafood, I can’t imagine why you would not do so.”

But she is not just one voice. As you can see, she is not alone and it is my hope that her voice and so many others will be heard by our policy makers and those charged with protecting our health. We stand here today representing the collective voice of the public to reduce mercury sooner. This represents a clear opportunity to combine science with common sense to equal public health protection.

Thank you