



ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Committed To Advancing Alaska's Public Health Since 1978

ALPHA RESOLUTION 3-2007

Support to Reduce Mercury Contamination from Coal Development

Sponsors: Alaska Community Action on Toxics, Pamela K. Miller
Cook Inletkeepers, Bob Shavelson

WHEREAS, on October 15, 2007, the State of Alaska Department of Health & Human Services announced Alaska's first-ever fish consumption guidelines restricting fish consumption for women who are or can become pregnant, nursing mothers, and children age 12 years and under due to mercury contamination¹;

WHEREAS, according to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, mercury and related compounds are potent neurotoxins that can cause serious short and long term effects to humans, especially young children²;

WHEREAS, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, coal-fired power plants and the combustion of coal are the leading sources of anthropogenic mercury in the environment today³;

WHEREAS, Alaska currently relies on coal for approximately 10% of its Railbelt electricity needs (compared to 45-60% in the Lower 48), and possesses only one operating coal strip mine;

WHEREAS, Alaska possesses roughly half the nation's coal reserves, and as energy prices remain high, coal development is increasingly attractive for local energy use and foreign markets;

WHEREAS, mercury is a persistent element that bioaccumulates and biomagnifies in the food chain, and can be transported on local, regional and global scales through atmospheric deposition and oceanic drift⁴.

¹ See <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/press/2007/pr101507fish-consumption.htm>

² See, e.g., <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts46.html>

³ See, e.g. <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t3/reports/volume3.pdf>

⁴ See <http://www.epa.gov/mercury/about.htm>



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NOW, THEREFORE, THE ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION DOES HEREBY RESOLVE to urge the Governor and the State of Alaska to 1) quantify, publicize and consider the amounts of mercury associated with any coal mine or power plant permit, prior to the start of public notice and comment on the permit(s), and 2) to develop a plan through a timely and public process to eliminate mercury releases from any new or expanded coal-fired power plant or coal mine in Alaska.

Adopted by vote of the ALPHA general membership on the 3rd day of December, 2007.

Fiscal & Public Health Statement: This action will result in minor costs associated with sending this resolution and accompanying cover letter to the Governor and key political leaders. This action will benefit public health by helping to elevate the risks posed by mercury contamination associated with coal development and use in Alaska.