



Monthly Energy Update

Draft DOE Study Identifies Pressing National Transmission Needs

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US EPA Restores Legal Basis for Obama-Era Mercury Rule Targeting Coal Plants

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final rule restoring the legal underpinning for an Obama-era mercury rule that required coal- and oil-fired power plants to curb harmful mercury emissions.

The rule, released Feb. 17, rescinded an April 2020 Trump administration rule that found regulating fossil fuel-fired generators for mercury emissions is not "appropriate and necessary."

"This finding ensures the continuation of these critical, life-saving protections while advancing President Biden's commitment to making science-based decisions and protecting the health and well-being of all people and all communities," EPA Administrator Michael Regan said in a statement.

Finalized in 2011, the EPA's Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, or the MATS rules, required coal-and oil-fired generating units to install pollution contols pursuant to Section 112 of the Clean Air Act, which covers hazardous air pollutants.

Mercury is considered a powerful toxin that can stunt brain development in young children and cause other serious health problems.

The Trump EPA had argued that the Obama administration's legal justification for the MATS rule gave undue weight to public health co-benefits such as reductions in fine particulate matter. The Biden EPA rejected that reasoning in its final rule.

"In today's action, EPA finds that the 2020 action was based on a fundamentally-flawed interpretation of the Clean Air Act that improperly ignored or undervalued vital health benefits from reducing hazardous air pollution from power