

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 18, 2011

The Honorable Lisa P. Jackson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460-0001

Dear Ms. Jackson:

I write to commend you on your recently proposed action, under the Clean Air Act, that would greatly improve air quality in New Jersey by requiring the Portland Generating Station in Upper Mount Bethel Township, PA, to install modern pollution control equipment.

I understand that some are calling on you to delay the proposed compliance schedule for reducing toxic emissions from this plant and, on behalf of New Jerseyans downwind of this plant, I strongly urge you to not grant this delay. As you know, New Jersey suffers 531 premature deaths, 445 hospital admissions and 987 heart attacks every year because of air pollution from neighboring states. It is time this ended and I truly appreciate that you are acting to address this problem.

Your action to stop the sickening pollution from the Portland Generating Station comes at a time when the Clean Air Act is under attack. This particular case demonstrates how important the Clean Air Act is to New Jersey and illustrates how any attack on the Clean Air Act is an attack on New Jersey.

For over fifty years, toxic emissions from the Portland Generating Station have wafted across the Delaware River and filled New Jersey's air with sickening pollutants. This aging coal plant emitted 30,000 tons of sulfur dioxide in just 2009 alone, which is, astoundingly, almost three times the amount of sulfur dioxide emitted in 2009 by all seven of New Jersey's coal plants combined.

Sulfur Dioxide burns the respiratory tract and can have serious health consequences for children with asthma and for those elderly who suffer from pulmonary disease. Soot and smog from this plant likewise worsen respiratory diseases, and mercury emissions from coal fired plants are well known to impact early childhood development.

I know that you have direct experience with how asthma affects the lives of children and families, and I commend you for your hard work to protect air quality on behalf of these

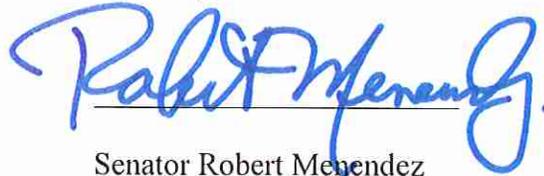
families. Your proposal to grant my state's petition and require the use of modern pollution control equipment would, in just three years, reduce toxic emissions from the Portland Generating Station by over 80%. Such equipment is long overdue at this plant, and the sooner it is installed, the sooner New Jersey children can breathe easier.

We must not allow polluters to set our priorities. Doing so would risk not only our health and that of future generations, it would risk the promise of a green economy built on clean energy jobs, energy efficiency innovations, and reduced waste and pollution.

It is time that we finally remedy the air pollution from the Portland Generating Station that impacts public health in New Jersey. The delays currently being requested are unwarranted when weighed against these impacts, and certainly won't be welcomed by those living downwind of the plant.

Thank you, again, for your dedication and hard work in protecting air quality in New Jersey and across the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Senator Robert Menendez
U. S. Senate