

The Maryland Healthy Air Act

The Clean Air Act of 1970 was intended to require best available technology to reduce air pollution from power plants, but loopholes and lax implementation have delayed real action.

Maryland has taken many important steps to reduce air pollution, but has virtually ignored some of the most important measures, including reductions at our oldest

power plants. If we are going to meet federal air quality standards, reduce the 'dead zone' in the bay, and take our first steps toward reducing Maryland's contribution to global warming, we must reduce power plant pollution.

The Healthy Air Act requires power plants to reduce emissions of the four main pollutants that come from power plants – mercury, carbon, nitrogen and sulfur.

Mercury

Just like lead, mercury's ability to stunt the growth of the developing brain makes it especially harmful to young children. Research indicates that an estimated one in six women of childbearing age have blood-mercury levels that may put their children at risk of learning or developmental problems.

Human exposure to mercury results primarily from eating contaminated fish. Because of mercury poisoning, the Maryland Department of the Environment advises limited consumption of fish from every river and public lake in the state, and of rockfish from the Chesapeake Bay.

Power plants are Maryland's top source of mercury pollution, responsible for 66% of the state's total mercury emissions. Mercury drifts into water bodies and accumulates in the tissues of aquatic life. Research has shown that local sources – within 60 miles – cause local mercury pollution.

Dead Zone and the Bay

More than a quarter of the nitrogen entering the Chesapeake Bay comes from air pollution. Nitrogen pollution

feeds the 'dead zone' of the Chesapeake Bay – a zone where dissolved oxygen levels are too low to support most life. Power plants must do their share to reduce nitrogen pollution and restore the bay.

Global Warming

Maryland is particularly vulnerable to the effects of global warming. The farming and fishing communities located along Maryland's 3,100 miles of coastline will be drastically affected by the rising sea levels and severe weather caused by global warming. Global warming also causes increased spread of infectious disease and worsened air pollution due to higher temperatures.

Power plants are responsible for 39% of emissions of carbon dioxide, the main pollutant that is causing global warming. To help curb global warming, we must reduce carbon dioxide emissions from Maryland power plants.

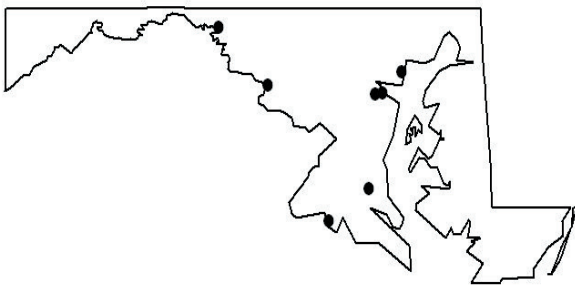
Smog and Soot

Smog and soot from Maryland power plants cause an estimated 17,000 asthma attacks and 700 premature deaths each year. Smog can also lead to the onset of asthma, which now afflicts 150,000 children in Maryland. More than 1.1 million Maryland children live within thirty miles of a power plant, the area in which the greatest health impacts are felt.

Maryland's seven oldest power plants are responsible for 86% of the nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide from the electric utility industry in the state.

Installing modern pollution controls on these seven plants would result in an estimated 500 fewer premature deaths caused by Maryland power plant emissions per year, and reduce the number of asthma attacks by 10,000 per year. The benefits of these reductions would be \$3.5 billion per year in fewer lost work days and lower medical costs.

Dirtiest Power Plants



Power companies operate seven power plants in Maryland that are so old that they are exempt from key provisions of the 1970 Clean Air Act.