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CPR Scholar Rena Steinzor Blasts EPA Water Quality Trading Guidance

Steinzor: 'Decision a Betrayal of Public Health'

Washington, DC – Dr. Rena Steinzor, a member of the Board of Directors of the Center for Progressive Regulation, and a professor of law at the University of Maryland, today responded to an announcement by the Environmental Protection Agency that it would permit sewage companies to develop pilot projects for emitting mercury pollution into the nation's waterways. Following is the text of her remarks.

EPA's decision to allow sewage treatment plants to develop mercury-pollution "pilot" projects is a betrayal of public health and the environment. Mercury in the human food chain is already at dangerous levels, with 44 states issuing fish advisories last year warning the public that it was unsafe to eat fish from local waters. EPA now intends to take us down the path of more, not less, mercury pollution.

This misguided approach adds insult to the grave injury caused by the President's 'Clear Skies' Initiative, which gives power plants a virtual green light to pump mercury into the air – poison that will travel from air to lakes and streams, then to fish, and eventually to humans. Corporate profits may go up because of these decisions, but people will surely die because of them, too.

Steinzor testified before the Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment of the U.S. House of Representatives in June 2002 on the mercury trading issue.

Founded in 2002, the Center for Progressive Regulation is a nonprofit research and educational organization of university-affiliated academics with expertise in the legal, economic, and scientific issues related to regulation of health, safety, and the environment. CPR supports regulatory action to protect health, safety, and the environment, and rejects the conservative view that government's only function is to increase the economic efficiency of private markets. Through research and commentary, CPR seeks to inform policy debates, critique anti-regulatory research, enhance public understanding of the issues, and open the regulatory process to public scrutiny.

For more information on CPR or its work on this or other issues, or to arrange interviews with CPR scholars, contact Matthew Freeman at 301-762-8980.