



February 07, 2011

Dear EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson,

We are writing to express support for stringent new standards to reduce toxic pollution like mercury from our nation's power plants and industrial facilities. In our most important role, as mothers, we are concerned by the myriad threats to the health of our children and children around the country posed by unsafe levels of air pollution.

Mercury, which is emitted from burning coal, is a potent neurotoxin that is particularly damaging to developing brains. An estimated one in six women of childbearing age in the United States has enough mercury in her bloodstream to put her child at risk of developmental disorders and birth defects should she become pregnant.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under your leadership is set to tackle these pollution problems head on with new standards over the coming months and years to clean up our nation's biggest polluters – power plants and industrial facilities – including limits for emissions of hazardous air pollutants such as mercury, lead, acid gases, and cancer-causing dioxins. These new standards for air toxics could save thousands of lives every year.

As you work to prepare and finalize limits on air toxics, we urge you to make these new standards as strong as possible to protect children across the country for generations to come. As a new year begins, we're calling on you to make it your top resolution to protect families from the health effects of dangerous pollutants like mercury.

Sincerely,

Natalie Portman

Natalie Portman is an actress and activist. She has long been an advocate for environmental issues and is particularly concerned about animal rights. In 2010, Portman's activist work and popularity with young people earned her a nomination for [VH1's Do Something Awards](#). She was most recently honored with the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress for her role

in Black Swan. Portman is expecting a child in early summer.

Dr. Leslie A. Duram
Professor and Chair
Department of Geography & Environmental Resources
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL

Leslie Duram is an expert in the social and ecological aspects of organic farming and local food, and the mother of 14-year old Kyle and 9-year old Maggie.

Dr. Katharine Hayhoe
Research Associate Professor
Department of Geosciences
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, TX

Katharine Hayhoe is an atmospheric scientist with expertise in assessing the potential impacts of climate change on a range of sectors, from water resources to human health, and is the mother of 3-year-old Gavin.

Dr. Lea-Rachel D. Kosnik
Associate Professor
Department of Economics
University of Missouri-St. Louis
St. Louis, MO

Lea-Rachel Kosnik is an expert in hydroelectric dam regulation, renewable energy, and environmental economics, and is the foster mother of seven-month-old Vincent.

Dr. Juliette Rooney-Varga
Associate Professor
Department of Biological Sciences
Director, UMass Lowell Climate Change Initiative
University of Massachusetts-Lowell
Lowell, MA

Juliette Rooney-Varga is an expert in environmental microbiology, microbial biogeochemistry, and climate change impacts on ecosystem services, and is the mother of twins, Caleb and Jordan (8), and Nathaniel (5).

Dr. Lisa G. Sorenson
President

Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds
Adjunct Assistant Professor
Department of Biology
Boston University
Boston, MA

Lisa Sorenson is an ornithologist and conservation biologist with expertise in impacts of climate change on waterfowl and wetlands, and waterbird and wetland ecology and conservation, and is the mother of two teen-age boys, Nick and Luke.

Dr. Jennie C. Stephens
Assistant Professor
Environmental Science and Policy Program
Clark University
Worcester, MA

Jennie Stephens is an expert on climate mitigation, energy technology innovation, and sustainable transitions, and is the mother of two daughters, Cecelia and Anna, ages 10 and 11.