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Sent: Saturday, June 10, 2006 6:56 PM

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Subject: Delaware Mercury Emissions: Special Education and Autism

I have continued the investigation of data showing possible human effects of mercury emissions in Delaware. Attached is a published article of similar data for the state of Texas provided by Sid Nelson. I have now compiled special education, learning disability and autism enrollment data by school district. (attached spreadsheet chart)

The data shows significantly higher percent enrollment of autistic children in Christina(1.46%), Caesar Rodney(0.98%), and Cape Henlopen (3.14%) school districts, than the nation rate of 1 in 166 or 0.6%.

The data also shows increased enrollment of children with learning disabilities in the Indian River and Capital school districts. When all children in special education are compiled, the Christina, Capital, Caesar Rodney, Cape Henlopen, Indian River and Seaford districts stand above the norm.

What do these districts have in common?

Seaford has a 30MW coal fired utility. Capital, Caesar Rodney, Cape Henlopen, Indian River are all down wind of the Indian River 784MW EGU much of the year. Christina is near heavy industrial areas.

This data and the prior paper demonstrate an association between environmentally released mercury and locally observed developmental disabilities. Further, studies are needed, and mercury emissions should be eliminated to the extent technology possible, as soon as possible.

The DNREC proposal for regulation of SO₂, NO_x, and Mercury emissions is a step in the right direction. Further mercury reductions with a goal of elimination should be sought. Over a thousand Delaware families downwind currently bear the burden of children with disabilities as a result of years of unabated pollution. It is long past time for the State to step forward and protect those most at risk - our children.