



Public Interest Center | P.O. Box 1049 | Columbus, OH | 43216-1049

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Public Invited to Comment on Proposed Mercury Variance For Four Ashtabula County Companies

A proposed change to the discharge permits for four Ashtabula area companies will be the focus of a February 10, 2011, Ohio EPA public meeting. The information session and public hearing will begin at 6 p.m. at the Kent State University Ashtabula Campus Main Hall (Blue & Gold Room), 3325 West 13th Street, Ashtabula.

Ohio EPA has issued proposed permit modifications to the following companies for the discharge of mercury from their facilities:

- First Energy Generation Corporation for its disposal system located at 2133 Lake Road East, Ashtabula Township;
- Reserve Environmental Services Inc. for its disposal system located at 4635 Middle Road, Ashtabula;
- ESAB Welding and Cutting Products for its disposal system located at 3225 Middle Road, Ashtabula; and
- Gabriel Performance Products for its facility located at 725 State Road, Ashtabula.

If given final approval, the modifications would allow the facilities to continue discharging mercury to Lake Erie at levels that exceed the 1.3 parts per trillion (ppt) limit required in their existing permits.

To achieve the 1.3 ppt discharge limit, each company would have to install extremely costly technology that would result in substantial economic impacts. Ohio EPA has evaluated the cost and feasibility of this approach and determined that a more effective way to lower the mercury impact is to reduce the amount of mercury being put into the wastewater systems. Therefore, in order to receive a variance from the mercury limit, all four companies would be required to identify the sources of mercury that go to their facilities and take steps to minimize the mercury releases from those sources.

Comments on the proposed changes to the discharge permits may be presented at the February 10 hearing or submitted in writing to: Ohio EPA, Division of Surface Water, Permits Processing Unit, P.O. Box 1049, Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049. The public comment period ends February 17, 2011. Following consideration of public comments, Ohio EPA will make a final decision on the permit modifications.

The proposed discharge permits and related materials are available for review at Ohio EPA's Northeast District Office in Twinsburg by first calling (330) 963-1200.