

The Izaak Walton League of America – Midwest Office, submits the following comments regarding the NR 446 revisions to the state mercury rule requirements.

The Izaak Walton League of America is a conservation organization with over 40,000 members nationally and including members who reside in Wisconsin. Founded in 1922, the IWLA is a national organization committed to protecting fish and wildlife, critical habitat, air and water resources. The Midwest Office of the League works on energy and air quality issues throughout the Midwest. The IWLA is located at 1619 Dayton Avenue, Suite 202, St. Paul, MN 55104. The phone number is (651) 649-1446.

In May 2006, Minnesota passed the Mercury Emissions Reduction Act, which sets a target for Minnesota's largest coal fired power plants to reduce mercury emissions 90 percent by 2014.

The IWLA urges the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to adopt a similarly strong rule that will reduce mercury emissions from power plants 90 percent by 2012 – an option under consideration by the Wisconsin DNR.

The purpose of Minnesota's Mercury Reduction Act is to reduce mercury emissions at Minnesota's largest power plants by 90 percent and to permit a utility to reduce emissions of other pollutants in conjunction with its mercury reduction plan. Minnesota's utilities are complying with the Act and have begun to file their plans to achieve a 90 percent reduction in mercury emissions.

Minnesota Power is availing itself of the opportunity provided by the Mercury Reduction Act to make deep reductions in the primary pollutants of concern from power plant operations: particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxides (as contributors to acid rain as well as precursors to fine particulate matter) as well as mercury.

Their plan filed in October 2006 confirm what mercury control research and practice has demonstrated – it is possible to reduce mercury from power plants burning Powder River Basin sub-bituminous coal by at least 90 percent at a very reasonable cost. The Company proposes to use activated carbon injection to achieve mercury control – the technology that most effectively controls mercury from sub bituminous coal at low cost.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency reviewed the Company's plan and in a report to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission stated that, "the planned mercury reduction technology will likely meet, and potentially exceed, the Mercury Emissions Reduction Act's goal of 90 percent reduction of mercury from Boswell 3."<sup>1</sup>

The majority of the costs associated with this \$198.2 million emission reduction project project are due to the pollution control equipment that will reduce sulfur dioxides and nitrogen oxides and particulate matter – pollutants targeted by the federal Regional Haze Rule and the Clean Air Interstate Rule. Mercury control technology accounts for only a

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<sup>1</sup> MPCA Review of Minnesota Power's Boswell 3 Environmental Improvement Project. April 25, 2007

small portion - about \$2.5 million - of the total project capital costs. Annual O & M costs for mercury controls will also be about 10% of annual O & M costs.

The review of Minnesota Power's compliance with the Act's 90 percent reduction target provides evidence to other states that the technology to control mercury from power plants that burn sub bituminous PRB coal is available, effective and low cost. Citizens of Minnesota and Wisconsin enjoy fishing, rely on fish for food and enjoy the economic benefits that angling brings to our states. Mercury levels in Minnesota and Wisconsin waters and fish will fall, in part, due to the installation of mercury controls at our region's coal-fired power plants. Minnesota Power mercury control cost estimates confirm what mercury control research and practice has demonstrated – it is possible to reduce mercury from coal-fired power plants by at least 90 percent at a very reasonable cost.

The League further urges the Wisconsin DNR to conduct the necessary assessments to determine the public health impacts from mercury emissions and the proposed rule reductions, as required by Wisconsin State Statute NR 285.27(2)(b).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter before the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Sincerely,

Nancy Lange  
Clean Air Program Coordinator  
Izaak Walton League of America – Midwest Office