MEDIA ADVISORY for MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2019

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MOMS FROM MORE THAN 15 STATES TO SHOW UP IN FORCE AT HEARING FOR TRUMP EPA’S CONTROVERSIAL MERCURY PROPOSAL; MANY AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 2019) — A few dozen Moms Clean Air Force members and staff from more than 15 states will testify at the only public hearing on the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) proposal to attack the legal foundation of our Mercury and Air Toxics Standards. This hearing will be held at the EPA Headquarters in the nation’s capital.

More than 30 moms from across the country (AZ, CO, DC, IA, MD, ME, MN, NC, NJ, PA, UT, SC, TN, TX, VA) will seize the opportunity to denounce publicly a proposal to undermine and weaken the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, which set limits on mercury and other toxic pollution from coal-fired power plants. Mercury, a neurotoxic heavy metal, disrupts the developing architecture of the fetal brain — and harms the brains of toddlers and adults, as well. The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards have been remarkably successful in protecting American families not only from mercury pollution but also from other dangerous, cancer-causing types of air pollution such as arsenic, lead, chromium, and nickel.

To defend our lifesaving Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, a few dozen members of Moms Clean Air Force will be speaking out against the Trump EPA’s dangerous proposal.

WHEN: Monday, March 18th, 2019; 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. ET (local time)

WHERE: Environmental Protection Agency Headquarters, WJC East Building, 1201 Constitution Avenue, NW

The following individuals will be available to media to answer questions before and directly after their speaking slots (with several others available upon request).

WHO:

NATIONAL

Trisha Sheehan is a mom of three who became a clean air advocate overnight when her family was exposed to a neurotoxin following a chemical spill due to a train derailment in 2012 near her hometown in New Jersey. Trisha knows first-hand how air pollution can harm children’s health. As National Field Manager for Moms Clean Air Force, she organizes moms across the country to demand that local, state, and federal standards for air pollution are in place to protect the health of our children.

[Trisha hails from Gloucester County, NJ]
REGIONAL
As a Latina woman and experienced community organizer, Washington, D.C.-based Gabriela Rivera is committed to fighting for protections that address air pollution and climate change, especially among low-income and people of color who bear a disproportionate burden of exposure to and impacts from pollution. Gabriela has a long history of constituency and political organizing, both at the state and national level. She organized to increase Latino civic engagement and access to higher education in California and Arizona. As Regional Field Manager for Moms Clean Air Force, Gabriela leads the Ecomadres initiative.

As an African-American woman and devout Christian, Shakeila Stuckey James is committed to fighting for protections that address air pollution and climate change, especially among low-income and people of color who bear a disproportionate burden of exposure to and impacts from pollution. As Regional Field Manager for Moms Clean Air Force, Shakeila co-leads the Community Rx initiative. [Shakeila, a mother of three, hails from Simpsonville, South Carolina]

ARIZONA
Claudia Faudoa is a tireless community organizer in her adopted hometown of Phoenix, Arizona where she lives with her three sons. Claudia's focus on immigrant rights and environmental justice has led her to rally in front of the Supreme Court and meet with her elected officials both in district and on Capitol Hill alongside fellow Moms Clean Air Force volunteers. Claudia is deeply concerned that any weakening of our protections against mercury would directly and disproportionately harm the health of Latino children in this country—a group already vulnerable to toxic exposure of many kinds. To fight back against this threat, Claudia will testify on behalf of her community and its determination to raise children in a healthy and protected environment. [Claudia is originally from Chihuahua, Mexico and immigrated to Phoenix 25 years ago].

COLORADO
For Christine Berg, a mom to two young children, commitment to public service runs deep. She served for five years as mayor and for seven years on the city council of the city of Lafayette, Colorado. Even though Christine's community borders significant oil and gas extraction - with more than 20,000 oil and gas wells in the adjacent county - it champions sustainability thanks in part to her advocacy. She has been outspoken about ensuring that our federal regulations hold polluters accountable in order to protect our kids' health. In fact, she recently penned an op-ed in Colorado Politics calling on her Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO) to defend our Mercury and Air Toxics Standards.

MAINE
Shauna Watt is an environmental non-profit professional, a local activist, and above all things, a mother to three children in South Portland, Maine. Shauna will be travelling to Washington, D.C. with her 12 year-old son, Donovan, who is a budding environmental advocate and avid march-goer. She and her husband take every opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of Maine with their family. As parents, they are concerned about the state having the dubious distinction of being the so-called “tailpipe of the nation.” In other words, upwind air pollution from Northeastern and Midwestern coal plants blows into Maine. Shauna is supportive of our Mercury and Air Toxics Standards because federal pollution regulations on plants in other states directly affect air quality in Maine.
NORTH CAROLINA
Kelle Pressley-Perkins hails from Charlotte, North Carolina, where she is mother to nine, four of whom are home-schooled. In her practice as a doula serving mostly minority women, she has had to conduct tough conversations with pregnant women about cutting back on eating fish high in mercury, lest it lead to attention deficit or loss of IQ in the baby. For Kelle, helping her patients means understanding what it feels like to bear the burden of protecting your child from the pollution from coal-fired power plants. Kelle penned a persuasive op-ed urging her North Carolina senators to defend our Mercury and Air Toxics Standards as if lives depend on them - because they do.

PENNSYLVANIA
Patrice Tomcik, Project Manager for Moms Clean Air Force coordinating climate work in states to reduce methane and carbon air pollution. Patrice is passionate about public health and advocating for a healthy environment at home, school, and outdoors for children. Patrice lives in Southwestern Pennsylvania with her two sons and husband which has a long history of poor air quality. With two coal fired power plants in the greater Pittsburgh region, Patrice is concerned about the air pollution impacting her children’s health and supports the Mercury Air Toxic Standards.

Mollie Michel is the Field Organizer for Moms Clean Air Force’s Pennsylvania Chapter. She has 20 years of experience in advocacy and communications on issues ranging from access for low-income children to arts and cultural programs to equity in public education funding as well as climate change and air pollution. Mollie lives in South Philadelphia with her husband and two daughters. As a resident in a city dubbed “asthma capital” because of the high asthma rate and challenging conditions for asthma-sufferers and having worked with impacted families across the city, Mollie supports our Mercury Air Toxic Standards in part because these strong standards prevent an average of 130,000 asthma attacks each year in the US.

SOUTH CAROLINA
Nikki Katrice White is a native of Camden, South Carolina, where she lives with her two children and works in the healthcare industry. As a black mother living in the shadow of the local coal-fired May Plant that powered the textile factory where her own mother had worked, Nikki is acutely aware of the need for strong air pollution controls to protect our public’s health. Simply put, Nikki understands that our Mercury and Air Toxics Standards protect children and families from exposure to mercury and other poisonous byproducts of burning coal. The MATS especially protect people of color, who are more likely to live in communities with coal- and oil-fired power plants.

TENNESSEE
Zozan Noman, a stay-at-home mom to two girls in Nashville, Tennessee, is passionate about clean air advocacy. As a longtime member of Moms Clean Air Force, Zozan has met several times with her elected leaders to bring awareness to the many ways that Congress can and should act to curtail air pollution. As an aunt to an asthmatic nephew whom she raised until the age of two, Zozan knows better than to take clean air protections for granted. When it comes to our Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, Zozan agrees with her state’s senior Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) that regulating mercury has been an enormously successful bipartisan effort to protect the health of all Americans.

TEXAS
Dee Dee Belmares is a life-long resident of San Antonio, Texas, where she serves as field organizer for Moms Clean Air Force. Dee Dee is an outspoken advocate for clean air protections for vulnerable children. As a small business owner and a mom, she understands that economic growth and clean air protections go hand in hand. Dee Dee is particularly concerned about maintaining our mercury standards; Texas has seen the most dramatic decline in its mercury emissions of any state since the 2011 mercury standards were introduced.
Melissa Enick is an adopted Native American of the Salish Tribes and was raised in South Texas. While working toward her BS in Animal Science, she became sick with mercury poisoning from dental amalgam. Today she is a native artist and also volunteers in dog rescue, fostering puppies from the streets of the San Antonio area. Melissa knows first-hand the devastating impact of mercury poisoning, and she is dedicated to curbing mercury pollution from all sources. As she puts it, “I have been battling mercury poisoning for approximately 30 years, the majority of my adult life. Mercury triggered rheumatoid arthritis, chronic fibromyalgia, chronic food allergies, and deafness, just to name off a few of my daily symptoms I battle.”

UTAH

Elizabeth Ewaskio is a Russian language instructor at the University of Utah who spent some formative years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Kyrgyzstan. She lives in Salt Lake City, Utah, with her toddler daughter and husband. The family is expecting another child this summer. As a ski-loving household, they spend as much time as possible at the Alta ski area (where Liz teaches skiing) to avoid the inversion season (December-February), when Utah’s air quality can quickly go from fair to dangerous. Because Elizabeth’s husband suffers from serious asthma, air quality is a paramount concern. The family’s personal experience with pollution-related health issues means that they understand the importance of strong federal regulations that protect us from pollution from coal-fired power plants.

MEDIA CONTACT: To arrange a one-on-one interview with any of our mothers travelling to attend the Mercury hearing, journalists can email Sasha Tenenbaum (in Washington, DC), stenenbaum@momscleanairforce.org, 917-887-0146

About the proposal: In late December 2018, Trump’s EPA proposed to reverse key elements of the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS), claiming that, as a result of its extremely limited accounting of the costs and benefits of the rule, the rule is neither “appropriate” nor “necessary.” But moms are not buying this immoral rationale that claims that protecting our babies’ brains from a harmful neurotoxin is neither appropriate nor necessary. In short, Trump’s EPA is proposing to undermine the rule, which could eventually make it easier for coal plants to spew mercury into the air. This attack could have devastating health consequences for families across the country, especially pregnant women and communities of color living in the shadow of coal plants. And no one welcomes this attack—not even the utility sector, which has already invested in strategies to keep mercury out of the air. Yet Trump’s EPA is clinging for cover to a cost-benefit argument in order to sabotage and eventually destroy our Mercury and Air Toxics Standards.

Moms Clean Air Force is a community of over one million moms—and dads—working together to combat air pollution, including the urgent crisis of our changing climate. For more information, go to http://www.momscleanairforce.org or follow us on Twitter @CleanAirMoms, Instagram @cleanairmoms, or Facebook.