

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT LAUDED FOR NEW STEPS TO REDUCE MERCURY EMISSIONS AT CEMENT KILNS

Environmental Integrity Project Supports MDE Efforts to Accurately Measure and Decrease Dangerous Emissions

WASHINGTON, D.C.///August 10, 2009///The nonprofit and nonpartisan Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) announced its support for actions taken today by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to reduce dangerous mercury emissions at Lehigh Cement Company's Union Bridge Plant in Carroll County, Maryland.

MDE issued a news release today outlining specific agreements with Lehigh Cement that will reduce mercury emissions by 80 percent by 1012, and thereby resolve a standing enforcement action taken by MDE earlier in 2007.

EIP wrote to MDE Secretary Shari Wilson in October 2008 asking the state to limit dangerous mercury emissions from the Lehigh plant after new data showed the cement kiln released nearly 400 pounds per year of this deadly neurotoxin, making it the state's second largest of emitter of mercury.

EIP Director Eric Schaeffer said: **"The state's consent agreement puts this plant on track to reduce those emissions at least 80% over the next three years, ahead of the deadline for complying with proposed federal regulations. Mercury is a deadly neurotoxin that can contaminate waterways and make fish unsafe to eat, especially for pregnant women and small children. Maryland's Attorney General and Department of the Environment deserve our thanks today for taking action to reduce these threats, with the apparent cooperation of Lehigh."**

Schaeffer added: **"Lehigh's permits should be amended to reflect this agreement, and to require continuous monitoring of mercury emissions to make sure that pollution controls are working as intended. The revised permit should also include close monitoring of any additional pollutants that may be associated with the combustion of biosolids at the plant."**

The original EIP letter, the MDE response and consent decree are available upon request.

ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY PROJECT

The Environmental Integrity Project (<http://www.environmentalintegrity.org>) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization established in March of 2002 by former EPA enforcement attorneys to advocate for effective enforcement of environmental laws. EIP has three goals: 1) to provide objective analyses of how the failure to enforce or implement environmental laws increases pollution and affects public health; 2) to hold federal and state agencies, as well as individual corporations, accountable for failing to enforce or comply with environmental laws; and 3) to help local communities obtain the protection of environmental laws.

CONTACT: Patrick Mitchell, for the Environmental Integrity Project, at (703) 276-3266 or pmitchell@hastingsgroup.com.