

LETTERS | JANUARY 5, 2012

## EPA Rules Causing Plant Closures

Economist Julian Simon had a term for it: "false bad news." Nicole Lederer's Dec. 29 letter ["New Pollution Rules Will Benefit Business"](#) blends false good news with false bad news to produce imagined business and health benefits.

The new EPA rules for air-quality standards are already having their (intended) effect on coal-fired power plants. These companies are announcing numerous plant closures and eliminating jobs. These losses are neglected by Ms. Lederer's rosy predictions of thousands of new construction jobs.

The statement that "coal-fired power plants produce about half of all mercury" is scientifically vacuous and misleading. Tell us please, half of what total mercury sources? Where is the missing comparison? "The Myth of Killer Mercury" by Willie Soon and Paul Driessen (op-ed, May 25, 2011) presents the relative mercury contributions from various sources—U.S. coal-fired plants, about 41-48 tons per year; forest fires, about 44 tons per year; Chinese power plants, 400 tons per year, while recurring geological events such as volcanoes and geysers emit 9,000-10,000 tons per year. With these missing pieces of information, the U.S. power plant contribution of mercury is closer to a 0.5% value than the "half of all mercury" claim by Ms. Lederer.

Would that Ms. Lederer and the Environmental Entrepreneurs expend an equal amount of environmental anguish over placing compact fluorescent lamp bulbs indoors in homes, schools and factories. These mercury-containing, stealth-pollution bulbs bring the mercury threat right into your living room and nursery. Computer-generated illusory health benefits while neglecting real-world mercury bombs at home is "real" bad news.

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