

# Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515  
January 29, 2004

Administrator Michael O. Leavitt  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Leavitt:

We write today as sponsors of H.R. 203, the Acid Rain Control Act, to urge you to hold at least one public hearing in New York State, specifically in the Adirondack Mountain region, on the recently issued clean air rules affecting the emission of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and mercury from electric power plants. In your effort to finalize regulations that have taken several years to develop, we would encourage EPA to hold more than one or two public hearings.

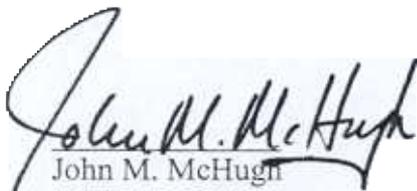
Bigger than the Grand Canyon, Glacier, Yellowstone, and Yosemite National Parks combined, the Adirondack Park contains a stunning array of mountains, wild lands, forests, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, and deep gorges. We both represent portions of the majestic Adirondack region and applaud your efforts to significantly cut sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide, the leading contributors to acid rain. In regard to mercury, while we recognize that the entire nation struggles with high levels of contamination by mercury in their waters, our region is unique and of critical importance because the harmful effects of mercury are compounded by the high levels of acid rain that ravages the Adirondack Park and its High Peaks region.

As a potent neurotoxin, mercury contamination is of great concern to us. The New York State Department of Health has issued 38 fish consumption advisories that advise children and women who may be pregnant to limit the locally-caught fish they eat. Recent research documents the ability for ecosystems to recover from elevated mercury levels and we believe that a strong EPA mercury standard will trigger positive results. The Adirondack Mountain region contains 20 of the bodies of water that are under advisory. This has a devastating impact on our region's tourism, recreation, public health, environment and national and state economies.

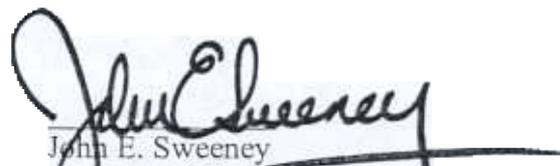
We believe a public hearing in the Adirondack Mountains on the EPA rules would be instrumental in formulating and enforcing effective standards that will eliminate acid rain and bring the levels of chemical contaminants in our waters back to healthy levels for all who live, work, and vacation by them.

Thank you, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



John M. McHugh  
Member of Congress



John E. Sweeney  
Member of Congress