

# **Wisconsin Stewardship Network**

## **Wisconsin Wildlife Federation**

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### **Sporting, Environmental Groups Urge Natural Resources Board to Reject the Legislative Attack on Mercury Reductions**

**Baraboo, WI**—The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and Wisconsin Stewardship Network, which together are made up of over 130 sporting and environmental organizations, urged the Natural Resources Board to protect Wisconsin's health, environmental and tourism economy by rejecting the legislative leadership's political attack on a proposed rule that would reduce mercury pollution from coal-burning power plants. The Natural Resources Board passed unanimously the mercury rule on June 25, 2003.

“The Natural Resources Board deserves credit for passing a rule based on sound science and policy that will help reduce mercury pollution in our lakes and fish,” said Marc Looze, Mercury Chair for the Wisconsin Stewardship Network. “We ask the Natural Resources Board to stand by their very decisive vote in favor of protecting Wisconsin families from mercury pollution. The Legislature's utility-biased attack on mercury reductions should be rejected.”

The reason for the Board's vote today is that the Senate and Assembly Natural Resources Committees have supported the position advanced by electric utilities and tried to block a strong mercury reduction rule. The Natural Resources Board and Legislature must act on the rule quickly in order to avoid a delay in mercury reductions of up to two years.

“Our members want mercury reductions so that someday fish will be safe to eat for everyone,” said George Meyer, Executive Director of Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. “Our members don't want politics to stand in the way of mercury reductions that will help protect the health of their families.”

Every lake and river in Wisconsin is on a health advisory due to widespread mercury contamination of fish. Wisconsin has the opportunity to be one of the national leaders in reducing mercury pollution from the largest source, coal-burning power plants. The proposed mercury rule would require utilities to reduce their mercury pollution 80% by 2015.

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