

Statement on H.R. 2190, Mercury Pollution Reduction Act of 2009

Congressman Zach Wamp

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Energy and Commerce Committee Statement for the Record

On behalf of the workers, families and communities in Tennessee, I am opposed to Mercury Pollution Reduction Act in its current form. H.R. 2190 phases out the use of mercury over a two year period and shuts down exports immediately, effectually forcing a flourishing industry in our region out of business. This legislation would force over 400 hard working people out of a job who are currently employed at the Olin Corporation in Charleston, Tennessee. H.R. 2190 would jeopardize the stability of the surrounding community by costing their economy millions of dollars in lost revenue.

The chlor alkali industry is willing to commit to transitioning to non-mercury technology. However, two years is simply not enough time. It is premature to establish a ban on mercury exports until industries are given enough time to switch to a viable mercury free technology allowing our U.S. manufactures to remain competitive.

Given the current nation-wide financial crisis, now is not the time to enact policies that will put hard-working Tennesseans with good jobs and good futures out of work. The current two-year mandate specified in H.R. 2190 will have a devastating impact at a time when unemployment numbers have reached record highs and continue to climb. Olin Corporation has thrived in East Tennessee for over 50 years and is an economic engine in the region, working with other companies locating in the area, like Wacker Chemical in Cleveland, Tennessee. The last thing Congress should do during an economic downturn is legislate Tennessee companies out of business.

I will continue working to increase the amount of time companies have to comply with this legislation if it becomes law.