Later this afternoon – at 2pm ET – EPA administrator Lisa P. Jackson is expected to announce EPA's new regulations on mercury and toxic pollution from coal-fired power plants.

EPA is developing the air toxics emissions standards for power plants under the Clean Air Act (Section 112), consistent with the D.C. Circuit's opinion (PDF) regarding the Clean Air Mercury Rule (CAMR).

The long-delayed final regulations have come under fire from industry groups and Republicans. Opponents say the rules may cause power plants to shut down and threaten the reliability of the power grid. A study released by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) states that EPA's regulations "may significantly affect bulk power system reliability depending on the scope and timing of the rule implementation and the mechanisms in place to preserve reliability." The EPA responded to this report in a November 2011 letter.

The U.S. Department of Energy recently released a report stating that the regulations won't cause power outages. The DOE report found that "the overall supply-demand balance for electric power in each region examined would be adequate." Gina McCarthy, assistant administrator at EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, stated:

> In the 40-year history of the Clean Air Act, EPA rules have not caused the lights to go out, and we won't let it happen going forward.

EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson was also a guest on an episode of the *Dr. Oz Show* which aired last night. She spoke about clean drinking water and EPA's new mercury regulations. She said that the health benefits of the new regulations outweigh the costs 20 to 1, and that the new rules will prevent up to 17,000 premature deaths per year. You can see a clip from that portion of the episode here.

Update (12/21 at 3pm): You can read the EPA news release here.

You can view the final Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) for power plants here.