Mercury Pollution: Analysis of Public Polices Regulating Production

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Abstract
Mercury is a known toxin to humans and is most dangerous to young children and the elderly. The legislation, as well as industry standards, that are currently in place are not strict enough when dealing with such a harmful substance. The impacts of mercury pollution, and later consumption through the eating of fish, will be costly to society in the forms of lower I.Q., future earnings, and higher social costs from needing to take care of those infected with the poison.

Literature Review
• Mercury exists in three different forms in nature each with their own hazards depending on the exposure amount and symptoms can include damage to the nervous system, respiratory failure, speech impairment, and muscle weakness, among others. (EPA)
• Women who are pregnant and young children should not consume large amounts of fish in case of mercury contamination. (EPA)
• Mercury bioaccumulates in fish causing larger fish to contain more mercury. (EPA)
• The Prisoner’s Dilemma in regards to business is when 2 or more companies agree to collude and then must decide whether to stick to the agreement or defect. (Pacheco et al. 466)
• The only way to fully ensure cooperation and escape the prisoner’s dilemma is through voluntary (in the form of industry lobbying) or involuntary (in the form of consumer lobbying) legislation. (Pacheco et Al. 475)
• Clear Skies Initiative of 2003 and 2005 if passed would have allowed 26 tons of mercury emissions by 2010 where as the Clean Air Act and Clean Power Act each allowed for only 5 tons of emissions in 2008. (Jeffords)
• With the United States being such a large country, it is no surprise that it is the worlds largest polluter, but they do not participate in the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). (Dolsak, 551)
• The UNFCCC was implemented in 1992 to reduce toxins on a world wide scale that lead to global warming and has since been ratified by 188 countries and the European Union (Dolsak, 551)

Methodology
In order to suggest new and tougher policies for mercury pollution, I will conduct a legal analysis of the policies currently in place.

The Prisoner’s Dilemma

Bibliography


Photos: http://healthandenergy.com/images/mercury_minamata.jpg
http://www.citizenscampaign.org/campaign/mercury.asp

Graph: http://www.beyondhastability.org/vg/50_prisoners_dilemma/

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