I am Susan Stewart. I give my testimony on behalf of Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment.

Recent media coverage of the Flint, Michigan lead contaminated water scandal has created widespread awareness of a confirmed scientific fact—there is no safe amount of lead exposure. Even very small amounts of lead are toxic to fetal and infant brain development. A recent study of adolescents showed that on average, even blood lead levels formerly considered very low, were still causing a loss of intellectual capability equivalent to 9 IQ points for the average teenager. Another study of American toddlers demonstrated the average blood lead levels found would reduce their IQs by 7 points. If our society knowingly allows this to continue, then public policy has surely failed, as Flint, Michigan has taught us.

Among other many other liabilities, coal fired

power plants are undeniably enormous neurotoxin factories. Coal combustion is now the primary source of lead for children in most of the United States. But mercury is orders of magnitude more toxic to the brain than lead, perhaps as much as 1000 times more toxic. It is toxic at concentrations measured in parts per trillion. And yet with little public protest, we are allowing ubiquitous mercury contamination, and the largest world wide source is coal power plants. 65% of environmental mercury comes from coal combustion.

Mercury toxicity in Utah is uniquely serious. The Great Salt Lake has the highest levels of mercury of any inland body of water in the United States, some of the highest levels discovered anywhere in the world. Utah has the only advisories in the country against eating water fowl because of mercury. 19 Utah water bodies harbor fish that are too toxic to consume because of mercury. If there was more wide spread testing, that number would be even higher. In 2009 the

US Geological Survey tested fish from 300 bodies of water throughout the country and found mercury in every fish tested.

The U.S. Center for Disease Control ranks toxic heavy metals, like mercury, as the number one environmental health threat to children. That danger is starkly evident from a new study that showed 30% of American women of child bearing age have enough mercury in their body to reduce the intellect of any baby they might conceive.

This is a national emergency. If we do not radically change public policy to address it, then we have contributed to a Flint, Michigan type scandal that reaches the entire country.