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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG Kaul Joins Coalition Challenging Rollback of Limits on Dangerous Emissions of Mercury and Other Hazardous Air Pollutants from Power Plants

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul is joining a coalition in filing a petition challenging the Trump administration’s repeal of the 2024 Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) Rule and reversion to outdated standards that harm the environment and public health.

The MATS Rule implements nationwide standards that limit emissions of toxic air pollutants from coal- and oil-fired power plants, including mercury, arsenic, lead and other toxic metals, in addition to acid gases, such as hydrogen chloride and formaldehyde. In 2024, following significant developments in the technologies used to control pollution, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) updated the standards for emissions of these hazardous air pollutants from power plants. Last month, the Trump administration rolled back the updated standard, allowing for more of these dangerous emissions to be released into the air.

“People’s health shouldn’t be put at unwarranted risk in order to help polluters make more in profit,” said AG Kaul. “The Trump administration should stop taking us backwards on the protection of our natural resources.”

While mercury and other hazardous air pollutants disproportionately harm people who live near coal- and oil-fired power plants, the emissions can also travel great distances and be deposited into other states. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that poses serious dangers to public health, especially for children and pregnant women. For example, a pregnant person’s consumption of mercury exposes their child to

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mercury and can cause lifelong developmental harms and neurological disorders such as seizures, vision and hearing loss, or delayed development. Exposure to mercury also increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and autoimmune dysfunction in adults.

Mercury emissions from power plants are also a major contributor to mercury contamination in U.S. waterways. Mercury pollution in lakes and rivers harms the local commercial and recreation fishing economies, as well as tribal nations and indigenous peoples that rely on fishing for subsistence.

The coalition is asking the court to determine that the repeal of the MATS rule is unlawful and must be reversed.

Joining AG Kaul in filing the petition are the attorneys general of Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington, along with the city of Chicago, the city of New York, and Harris County, Texas.