DE 08-103

The Senate of the State of New Hampshire

107 North Main Street, Room 302, Concord, N.H. 03301-4951

THEODORE L. GATSAS
Republican Leader
District 16

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Friday, September 5, 2008

Chairman Thomas Getz
New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
21 S. Fruit St, Suite 10
Concord, N.H. 03301-2429

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N. H. PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Graham J. Morrison, Commissioner
New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
21 S. Fruit St, Suite 10
Concord, N.H. 03301-2429

Clifton Below, Commissioner
New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
21 S. Fruit St, Suite 10
Concord, N.H. 03301-2429

Dear Chairman Getz and Commissioners:

I am writing to urge you and the NH Public Utilities Commission to move expeditiously on the matter concerning the mercury reducing scrubber installation at Public Service of New Hampshire's (PSNH) Merrimack Station in Bow, New Hampshire.

As you know, my Senate District encompasses the great town of Bow and I'm deeply concerned about unnecessary delays and the unintended economic impacts to the town, the entire state, as well as needless delays in reducing targeted mercury emissions from this power plant. I am particularly distressed at the comments and innuendo that your Office of Consumer Advocate has made in reviewing the costs of the project. The legislation is clear – the scrubber must be in place by 2013 – in fact there is no authority in RSA 125-0:13 for the PUC to approve scrubber construction.

Mr. Getz, I think you know my record of fighting on behalf of electricity consumers. I think you also know my record of trying to move as quickly as possible in reducing harmful mercury from our environment. However, I am very fearful that further unnecessary delays in installing the scrubber at Merrimack Station will raise costs for consumers who are already stretched to their limit on total energy costs. Further, delays would not only be imprudent on behalf of customers at this point, but detrimental to the overall energy balance in this state. The harmful mercury emissions will be at a needlessly higher level than the legislature intended (see attached documents - Mercury hot-spot locations in New Hampshire).

The increased cost of the scrubber project is now at $457 million. It is my hope that your office will continue to review how this installation proceeds in an effort to ensure it is done in a manner that doesn't unnecessarily increase costs for customers, but the project must continue to go forward immediately. Without your prompt intervention, I have serious concerns for potentially bankrupting the town of Bow, as well as with impacts to the solvency of the economy of the state of New Hampshire and the hundreds of jobs that will be at stake during a time when not one person can afford to lose a source of income. If you care, as I do, about the costs of energy, a lengthy (additional) review process will absolutely raise electric costs.

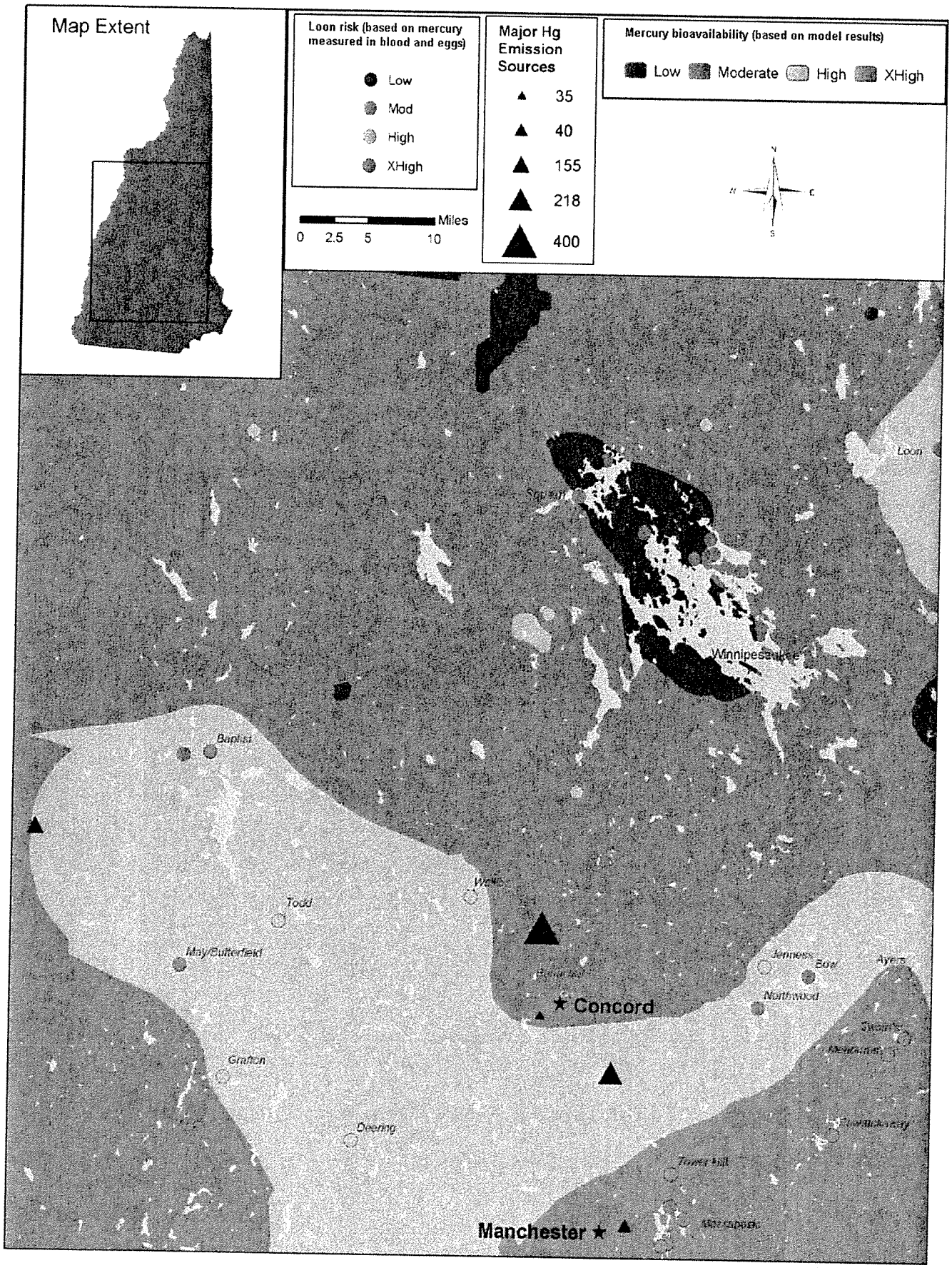
Given the sensitivity of this matter I look forward to a prompt response. Thank you in advance for your attention.

Sincerely,

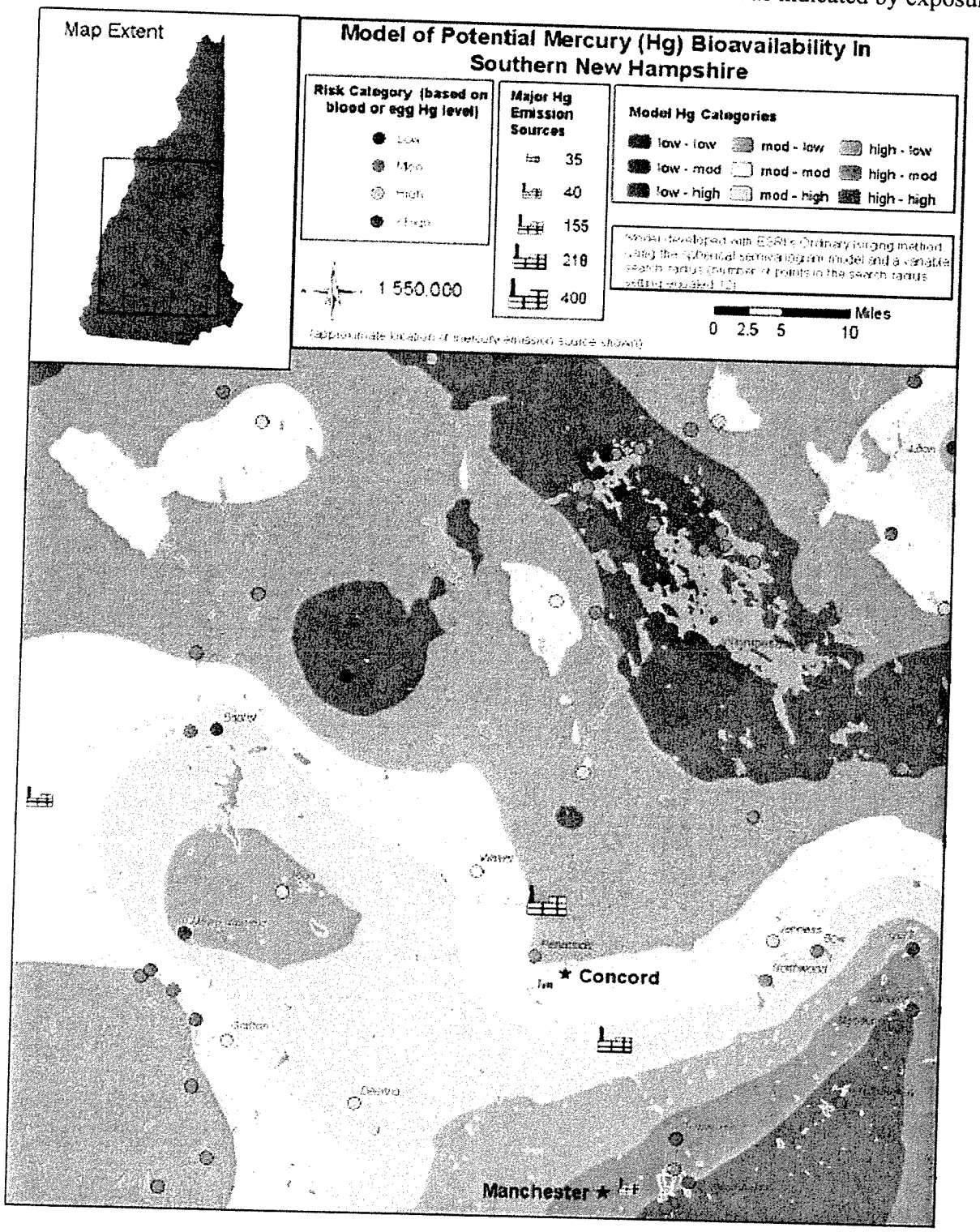
Theodore L. Gatsas
State Senate, District 16

Enclosures

cc: The Hon. Governor John Lynch
cc: Thomas Burack, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Services
cc: Leon Kenison, Chairman, Board of Selectman, Town of Bow


Map Extent
Loon risk (based on mercury measured in blood and eggs)
Low
Mod
High
XHigh
Miles
0 2.5 5 10
Major Hg Emission Sources
35
40
155
218
400
Mercury bioavailability (based on model results)
Low
Moderate
High
XHigh
N
W
E
S
Loon
Winnipesaukee
Baptist
Wells
Todd
May/Butterfield
Concord
Jenness
Bow
Ayers
Northwood
Grafton
Deering
Manchester

Appendix 2. Map of Hg risk to breeding Common Loons in southern NH as indicated by exposure.



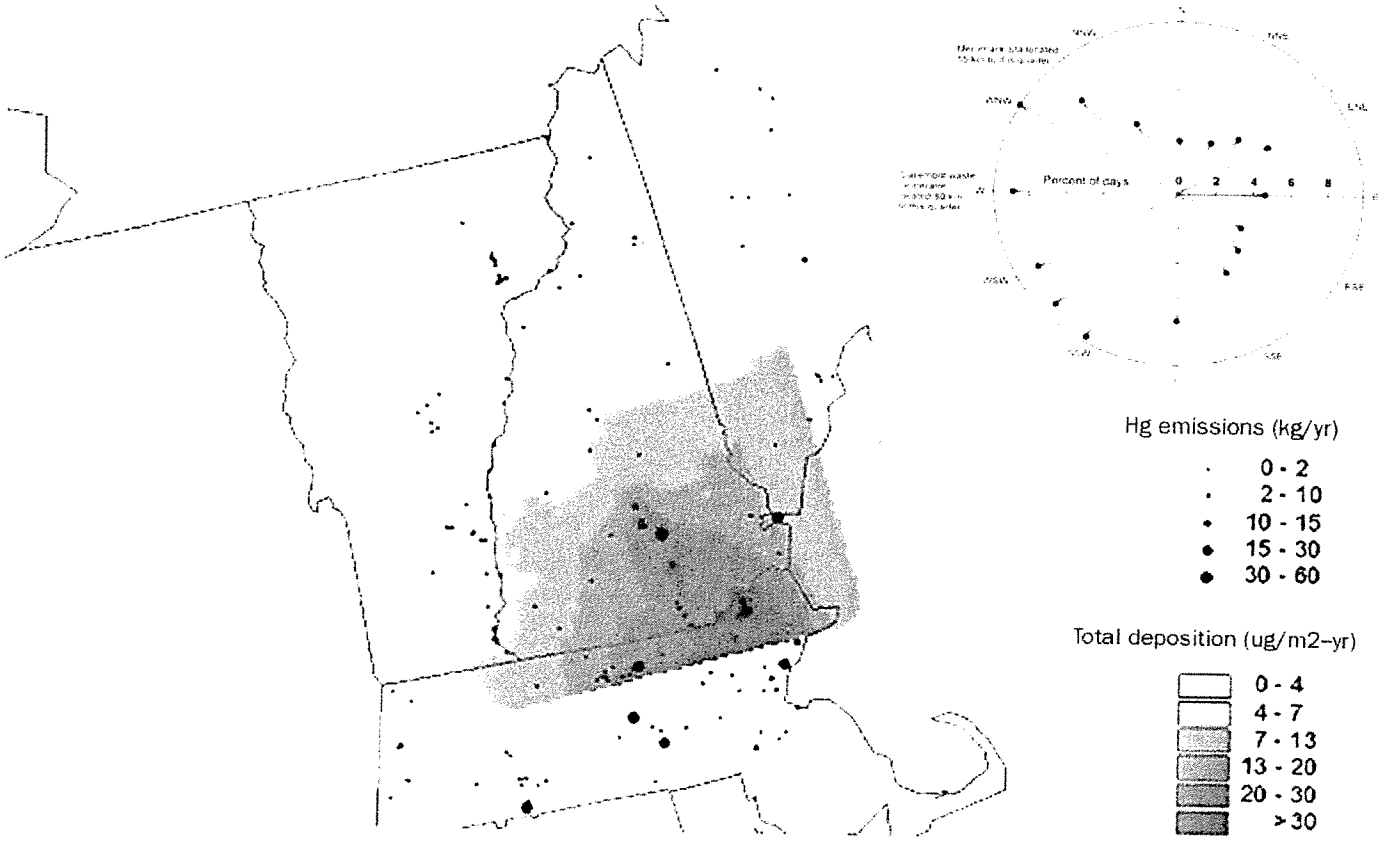


Figure 5. Left, map showing total mercury (Hg) deposition for 2002, estimated using the industrial source complex short-term model, or ISCST3; right, wind rose showing the direction of air flow for May through August 1999 to 2002 in southern New Hampshire, based on weekly wind roses from the NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) Air Resources Laboratory's READY (Real-time Environmental Applications and Display System) analyses (NOAA 2006).