TOXIC TRADE: The Coal-to-Mercury Cycle between Alaska and Asia

1. Coal is strip mined in Alaska.

2. Alaska coal is exported to China for combustion.

3. Imported coal is burned to produce electricity, which releases pollution into the air.

4. The Brown Cloud: Mercury emissions from coal burned in China are carried across the Pacific Ocean.


Coal in Alaska

- Alaska has large coal reserves, but coal mining and processing drives indigenous land loss and habitat degradation.
- Coal mining and processing activities have a detrimental impact on local communities and the environment.

Coal Powers Asia

- China is the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, largely due to the combustion of coal. This black smoke is formed everywhere from industrial boilers to power plants. It is called the "brown cloud." Mercury emissions from coal plants in Asia are carried across the Pacific Ocean to Alaska.

The Brown Cloud

- In 2008, China was responsible for 80% of total mercury emissions into the atmosphere, contributing to the formation of the "brown cloud." This cloud is formed from coal-fired power plants and is carried across the Pacific Ocean to Alaska.

Mercury in Alaska's Fish

- Mercury in Alaska's fish is a significant concern. Exposure to mercury can cause neurological and developmental problems in children and can lead to developmental disabilities and other health issues.

A Dangerous Cycle

- The cycle shows how coal is mined in China, transported to power plants, and burned to produce electricity, which releases mercury into the atmosphere. This mercury is then transported to Alaska, where it accumulates in fish, posing a significant risk to public health.

COAL TO ASIA MEANS MERCURY IN ALASKA'S FISH

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