



Filthy Five: Ashta Chemicals Ashtabula, Ohio Plant

Ashta Chemicals owns and operates one of the five remaining chlor-alkali facilities in the United States that still has not committed to stop using mercury-cell technology. The plant releases hundreds of pounds of mercury pollution each year into the environment and has been subject to fines and complaints from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Ohio Attorney General for discharging mercury into Lake Erie. Even though mercury-free technology has been readily available since the early 1970s, in the nineteen years between 1987 and 2005, the Ashta plant reported emitting more than 27,000 pounds of mercury into the air. Because of this record, Oceana has dubbed Ashta's Ashtabula plant one of the Filthy Five.

Key Statistics on Ashta Chemicals, Ashtabula, Ohio

- Ashta Chemicals is the third largest mercury air polluter in the state according to 2005 EPA Toxics Release Inventory data.
- In 2005, the plant reported emitting 813 pounds of mercury into the air.
- Ashta released more than 27,400 pounds of mercury into the environment between 1987 and 2005.
- Ashta spent \$29.7 million (2006 dollars) since 1992 to keep up with environmental regulations such as waste disposal and building and maintaining pollution control technology. This does not include expenditures for hazardous waste disposal, hydrogen filtration, litigation, mercury permitting, or the purchase of mercury itself.
- If these costs were added, the company's expenditures would exceed the expected conversion cost of approximately \$30.6 million.

Benefits of Switching

- Although the cost of converting to mercury-free technology runs in the millions, analysis shows that the majority of these costs would be recouped within five years due to energy savings, increased capacity and eliminating millions of dollars in fines, upgrades and cleanups.
- Over five years, shifting to mercury-free technology could save Ashta Chemicals approximately \$6.5 million in electricity costs, \$3.4 million from eliminating maintenance costs associated with wastewater treatment, \$2 million from hazardous material disposal and an additional \$1.5 million from monitoring mercury.
- Shifting could increase energy efficiency by 25 percent, saving enough electricity to power approximately 2,700 average-sized American homes.
- Ashta could increase plant capacity by 25 percent, which could increase sales by \$38.8 million over five years.
- Ashta could earn \$1.6 million in extra profits from its increased sales due to saved electricity costs.
- Being a responsible corporate citizen would benefit the company's finances, while at the same time safeguarding the health of its employees, the public and the environment.

Cost to Switch:	\$30.6 million
Costs of Using Mercury	\$29.7 million
Estimated Benefits (Over 5 years)	
Energy Savings	\$ 6.5 million
Water Treatment	\$ 3.4 million
Waste Disposal	\$ 2 to \$3.3 million
Monitoring	\$ 1.5 million
Capacity Increase (Over 5 years)	
Sales	\$38.8 million
Energy Savings	\$ 1.6 million

The four other chlorine plants that have not committed to going mercury-free are Olin Corporation's plants in Charleston, Tenn., and Augusta, Ga.; PPG Industries in Natrium, W.Va.; and ERCO Worldwide in Port Edwards, Wis.