



**REPORT TO THE NEW ENGLAND GOVERNORS
AND EASTERN CANADIAN PREMIERS
ON MERCURY PROJECTS**

**Conference of New England Governors
and Eastern Canadian Premiers**

August 2003

Introduction and Background

The Mercury Task Force and the Committee on the Environment are pleased to submit this status report on the Mercury Action Plan to the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/ECP). This report provides an overview of the major accomplishments for the past year of implementation of the Mercury Action Plan adopted by the Conference in 1998. It also outlines the project priorities of the Committee on the Environment for the coming year.

Implementation of the regional mercury project is the responsibility of the NEG/ECP Mercury Task Force, with the assistance of specific work groups. The Committee on the Environment recognizes the human and financial resources committed by the Task Force and work group members. Success in the plan's implementation is due to the considerable personnel resource commitments from each jurisdiction. The Committee on the Environment also recognizes the valuable contribution, both human and financial, made by the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM), the Northeast Waste Management Officials Association (NEWMOA), Environment Canada, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The States of New York and New Jersey have also been active participants, and their contributions are much appreciated.

This past year the Mercury Task Force has spent considerable effort, with the assistance of NESCAUM, on revising the regional mercury emissions inventory in order to assess progress in meeting the Mercury Action Plan goal of 50% reduction by 2003. The Committee on the Environment is pleased to report that this goal has not only been achieved, but surpassed. Current data reveals that the reductions achieved to date amount to **54%**, from the 1998 baseline. This represents a major step toward reaching the next interim goal of 75% reduction by 2010, with an ultimate goal of virtual elimination of anthropogenic mercury emissions in the region. Emission reduction estimates are summarized in the attached report.

Summary of Major Accomplishments

The Committee on the Environment commends the fine work of the Mercury Task Force and its work groups over the last 12 months. Resolution 27-6 (*Resolution Concerning Environment*), adopted by the NEG/ECP at its meeting in Québec City, Québec in August 2002, tasked the Committee on the Environment with the following mercury charges:

- refine the regional emissions inventory and complete a report on progress toward achieving the Mercury Action Plan target of 50% by 2003;
- continue to support implementation of the *Statement of Draft Mercury Education and Reduction Programs*, adopted by the NEG/ECP in July 2000;
- develop recommendations for completing school mercury clean-outs;
- through the efforts of the joint boiler work group, develop jurisdictional strategies for this sector;
- take steps to implement the recommendations in the summary report *Mercury Deposition in the Northeast States and Eastern Provinces: Network Assessment and Recommendations*;

- seek opportunities to support innovative technologies to address mercury pollution; and
- exchange information on mercury programs with the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP).

The Mercury Task Force, assisted by its work groups, has accomplished all these tasks. The Committee on the Environment is pleased to submit to the 28th Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers the following work products (all of which are included in the *NEG/ECP Environment Projects Background Material 2003*, submitted to the NEG/ECP in July 2003):

Report on Progress in Meeting the 2003 Reduction Goal

With invaluable assistance from NESCAUM and jurisdictional air programs, the MTF has updated the mercury emissions inventory in order to report on progress on achieving the 50% 2003 reduction goal. This update is summarized in a brief report which demonstrates that the regional emission reduction target has been achieved.

Survey and Summary Report of Jurisdictional Strategies to Address Utility Boilers

This document provides information on the status of efforts by the states and provinces to address the utility boiler sector on a multi-pollutant basis.

Northeast School Mercury Clean-Out Survey Update

This summary reviews the status of school mercury clean-out programs in the eleven jurisdictions of the NEG/ECP.

Regional Dental Program Matrix

This matrix contains an update of jurisdictional dental mercury programs in the northeast. Considerable work with dentists in this area has been completed or is ongoing by all our jurisdictions.

Update on New England Mercury Legislation

This report updates the Conference on the status of mercury-related legislation in New England. This important effort has been spearheaded by NEWMOA. Efforts by Canadian jurisdictions to develop and implement the Canada Wide Standards for mercury constitute a complimentary approach to mercury pollution prevention efforts in Canada.

Activity Summary for Partnering Jurisdictions

This summary lists pertinent activities related to mercury in New Jersey and New York. It also provides additional information on the U.S. EPA's monitoring efforts, the status of the Canada Wide Standards process, and an update on the UNEP deliberations.

Project Priorities: 2004-2006

The Mercury Task Force (MTF), under the guidance of the Committee on the Environment, has identified a number of focus items for the next two years. These focus areas are implementation priorities identified by the Committee and Task Force from the

actions specified in the Plan. While work will continue on the various aspects of the Mercury Action Plan, the following areas will be emphasized:

PHASE 2 REGIONAL MERCURY EMISSIONS INVENTORY

Ongoing:

- In Year 5, the MTF, with assistance from the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM), completed an updated regional emissions inventory compatible with the base inventory of the Mercury Action Plan. The purpose of this updated inventory was to assess progress in meeting the interim goal of 50% reduction in mercury emissions by 2003. In Years 6-7, the Task Force will complete Phase 2 of the update of the regional inventory. In Phase 2, the Task Force will revise the inventory for existing sources and add new sources that may not have been captured in the base inventory, such as mercury in the waste stream, schools and products, mobile sources, biomass, residential heating and landfill leachate. It is expected that elements of this refined inventory will be ready for the 2004 Conference. The Phase 2 inventory will be used to identify priority areas for action and to assist in assessing progress in meeting the goal of 75% reduction in regional emissions adopted by the Conference in August 2001.

New:

- New sources: The MTF will seek support for efforts to improve estimates for the most significant “new” sources identified in the Phase 2 Inventory, including but not limited to: mobile sources; residential heating; biomass; and landfill leachate and gases.
- Strategy: Based on the Phase 2 inventory, the MTF will develop a strategy to achieve reductions in those sources to meet the 2010 reduction target.

EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS

Ongoing:

- The Joint Boiler work group is a partnership of the Acid Rain Steering Committee and the Mercury Task Force to evaluate technology options, develop utility and non-utility boiler reduction targets and explore strategies to achieve multi-pollutant benefits from various control strategies. Over the past year, the work group documented jurisdictional efforts to develop strategies for utility boilers that will promote maximum economically and technically feasible reductions in mercury and other emissions from this sector. The Joint Boiler work group, recognizing the technical and economic advantages of a multi-pollutant approach to boiler controls, will continue to include participation by acid rain and mercury representatives and will seek to include participation by representatives of the climate change group as well. The Joint Boiler work group will report back on progress by the jurisdictions to implement their multi-pollutant strategies for utility boilers in 2005.

RESEARCH, MONITORING AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Ongoing:

- The MTF will continue to seek opportunities to support innovative technologies to address mercury pollution, including methods to assess dental amalgam separator technologies, improved monitoring and modeling technologies, and alternatives to mercury containing processes and products. The monitoring work group of the MTF will continue to focus on implementing the recommendations contained in the draft summary report *Mercury Deposition Monitoring in the Northeast States and Eastern Provinces: Network Assessment and Recommendations*, prepared by the MTF and NESCAUM, and coordinating regional efforts addressing the mercury Total Maximum Daily Loads assessments and recommendations.

New:

- Long-term Strategic Monitoring of Biota: The MTF will seek to partner with existing research organizations, such as the Northeast Ecosystem Research Cooperative (NERC) and (COMERN) to develop a coordinated, strategic plan for monitoring of biota in the region to document long-term changes/fluctuations in mercury levels.
- Deposition Modeling and Mapping: Over the next two years, the MTF will track EPA Region I efforts to update regional air deposition modeling and mapping for mercury. Specifically, the MTF will work to ensure that the updated modeling is comparable to modeling efforts conducted under the 1998 NESCAUM/NEWMOA/NEIWPC mercury report so that changes in deposition patterns can be adequately assessed.
- Regional Meeting: The MTF will seek support to sponsor a regional meeting on advances in mercury science and research.

SOURCE REDUCTION, SAFE WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

Ongoing:

- The Task Force will continue to support the implementation of the *Statement of the Draft Mercury Education and Reduction Programs*, which was adopted by the NEG/ECP at its Conference in Halifax in July 2000. In the New England States, efforts to adopt and implement legislation to address mercury-added products (such as the legislative model developed by NEWMOA) will continue to be a priority. In the Eastern Canadian jurisdictions, these principles will be implemented through jurisdictional programs or through the Canada Wide Standards process. The Task Force will also continue to support and participate in

the regional mercury education and reduction clearinghouse administered by
NEWMOA.

New:

- Mercury-added Products Report: With the assistance of NEWMOA, the MTF will develop a report on the progress of efforts to identify mercury-added products, mercury content of those products, mercury-free alternative products and documented cases where mercury has been phased out of a product or product category.
- Mercury “Reservoirs” Inventory and Strategy: Under the guidance of the MTF, each jurisdiction will inventory its historical mercury “reservoirs” (e.g., mercury and mercury-added products at dental offices, dairy farms, schools, public buildings, and other facilities) and develop a strategy for collecting and managing any such reservoirs to prevent their introduction to the wastestream.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Ongoing:

- The MTF will continue to focus on outreach and education efforts to ensure that programs initiated in the recent past are effectively implemented. Continued outreach and education is critical in support of mercury source separation, recycling and reduction efforts. In addition, outreach efforts targeted to specific sectors, including dental offices and healthcare facilities, will continue, as will public education about fish consumption advisories, and assistance to municipalities and institutions. School mercury clean-outs also remain a priority in the Northeast.

New:

- Dental Sector: As part of the continuing efforts to reduce mercury discharges from the dental sector, the MTF will pursue a goal of having 50% of dentists in the region install amalgam separators by the end of 2005. Each jurisdiction will develop a strategy to ensure that this goal is aggressively pursued.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

Ongoing:

- The Mercury Task Force will continue to coordinate its activities with the United Nation’s Environmental Program’s (UNEP) mercury assessment, and seek to work with that project where applicable. If possible, a Mercury Task Force representative will represent the NEG/ECP on the UNEP mercury assessment working group. The MTF will also work with other national and international groups to pursue mercury reduction, including Environment Canada, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Commission on Environmental Cooperation, and the Environmental Council of the States. In addition, the MTF will continue to monitor issues regarding mercury as a commodity in the global marketplace,

including such topics as stockpiling, retirement and mining, and engage in discussions on the disposition of mercury stocks, as appropriate.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

The Mercury Task Force, in consultation with the Committee on the Environment, has proposed changing the planning and reporting cycle for this effort from annual to biannual. Under this scenario the MTF will meet on an annual basis, while conducting periodic conference calls in order to keep track of progress and make adjustments as needed. The reasons for this are twofold: many of the current focus areas are long-term in nature with progress happening over a greater length of time, and many jurisdictions are finding it more difficult in this time of severe budget restrictions, to allocate the staff time and travel funds necessary to accommodate semi-annual meetings.

Mercury Task Force

The Mercury Task Force has met twice since August 2002 (in Portland, Maine in October 2002 and in Montréal, Québec in June 2003) and conducted numerous conference calls of its work groups. The NEG/ECP Committee on the Environment recognizes the fine work of the Task Force and work groups in implementing the Mercury Action Plan, and commends its accomplishments this year.

NEG/ECP Mercury Task Force

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