



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

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

August 2002

Introduction and Background

The Committee on the Environment is pleased to submit the report on the mercury project to the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/ECP). This report provides an overview of the major accomplishments in the 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.

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 26.3 (*Resolution on Environment Projects*), adopted by the NEG/ECP at its meeting in Westbrook, Connecticut in August 2001, tasked the Committee on the Environment with the following mercury charges:

- complete an update of multi-pollutant control options for utilities;
- complete a report on mercury monitoring in the region;
- continue to advance mercury pollution prevention and education initiatives; and
- advocate for long-term mercury "retirement" strategies.

The Mercury Task Force, assisted by its work groups, accomplished all these tasks this year, and then some. The Committee on the Environment is pleased to submit to the 27th 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 2002", submitted to the NEG/ECP in July 2002):

The Update of the Joint Boiler Report

This report, drafted by a joint committee representing the Acid Rain Steering Committee and the Mercury Task Force, updates the initial June 2000 Joint Boiler Report, and provides recommendations for further review and action with respect to utility and non-utility boilers and emission reduction targets.

Northeast School Mercury Clean-Out Survey

This piece reviews the status of school mercury clean-outs and spill handling in the eleven jurisdictions of the NEG/ECP. It also includes case studies of two mercury spill incidents in our region and how the appropriate agencies responded.

Regional Dental Program Matrix

This matrix covers jurisdictional dental mercury programs in the northeast. Considerable work with dentists in this area has been done 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.

Summary of Outcomes of the NEWMOA Mercury Retirement Conference

NEWMOA conducted a highly successful conference in May 2002 to review developments in mercury retirement and storage issues, and drafted this summary of outcomes.

Mercury Monitoring in the Northeast States and Eastern Canadian Provinces

The Task Force, with the support of NESCAUM, has developed a report evaluating the regional mercury monitoring network and recommending specific actions to maintain and strengthen this monitoring system.

Also, the Mercury Task Force has been actively engaged in the updating of the baseline inventory of mercury emissions in our region, and may have additional information available for the August 2002 NEG/ECP Conference. NESCAUM has provided invaluable work in this area.

Year Five (2002-2003) Project Priorities

The Mercury Task Force has identified a number of focus items for the coming year, in consultation with the Committee on the Environment. 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 four areas will be emphasized:

Refine the Regional Emissions Inventory

In Year 4, the Mercury Task Force, with assistance from the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM), completed a preliminary 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 Year 5, the Task Force will refine the regional inventory, not only for existing sources but also including new sources that may not have been captured in the base inventory, such as mercury in the waste stream, schools and products.

This process will involve the Task Force working closely with the agencies that developed the original inventory – NESCAUM, NEWMOA, NEIWPC (New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission) and EMAN (Canadian Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network) – as well as other agencies such as US EPA and Environment Canada, to update the database and refine inventory methodology. Like the original inventory, this process entails considerable work and will require a significant dedication of resources by the Task Force and the jurisdictional environmental agencies. It is expected that this refined inventory will be ready for the 2003 Conference.

Develop Recommendations for Completing School Mercury Clean-outs in the Northeast

In Year 5, the Task Force will also develop recommendations on a regional goal and develop recommendations for completing mercury clean-outs in all middle and high schools in the region.

Outreach/Education and Pollution Prevention

The MTF will continue to focus efforts on these critical areas to ensure that the many successful programs that have been initiated in the recent past are effectively implemented. Linkages between outreach and education and mercury source separation, recycling and reduction efforts will be emphasized in order to leverage progress in each area. Outreach to specific sectors, including schools, dental offices and healthcare facilities will continue, as will public education about fish consumption advisories, and assistance to municipalities and institutions. Continued efforts to reduce mercury discharges from the dental sector will also be a priority.

The Task Force will also 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.

Joint Boiler Work Group: Development of Jurisdictional Strategies

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. This year, the work group completed a review and re-assessment of its 2000 report and found that report to still be valid. In the next phase of its work, the Joint Boiler Work Group will continue to assess information in this area and will begin to develop regional strategy options 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.

Research, Monitoring and Innovative Technologies

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 technologies and alternatives to mercury containing processes and products. In addition, the Task Force will pursue implementation of recommendations contained in the recently completed draft summary report ***Mercury Deposition Monitoring In The Northeast States and Eastern Provinces: Network Assessment and Recommendations***, prepared by the MTF and NESCAUM. The MTF will also work to coordinate regional efforts addressing mercury Total Maximum Daily Loads assessments and recommendations. These activities will be undertaken by a new monitoring work group of the Mercury Task Force.

Participate in the UNEP Mercury Program

The Mercury Task Force will 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.

Mercury Task Force and Work Groups

The Mercury Task Force has met twice since August 2001 (in Montréal, Québec in December 2001 and in Providence, Rhode Island in May 2002) 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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Duncan MacKay	NS Dept. of Environment & Labour
Debbie Johnston	PEI Dept. of Fisheries, Aquaculture & Environment
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