

FISCAL YEAR 2007 PROJECT Persistent, Bioaccumulative, & Toxics (PBT) & Other Priority Chemicals

Mercury Reduction in Schools in Massachusetts & New York

Project Strategy: Remove unnecessary mercury and mercury-containing products from schools in Massachusetts; assist with planning and delivering workshops on mercury and mercury school cleanout for public school and Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) officials in New York State.

Schools have significant quantities of bulk mercury in storage or contained in materials and products. During the past several years, a number of accidental releases have been documented in schools across the region. These releases have been costly for schools and have resulted in preventable exposures to children and staff. The New England Governor's Conference/Eastern Canadian Premiers Secretariat Mercury Action Plan and the Massachusetts Zero Mercury Strategy have identified the removal of mercury from schools as an important step in achieving the goals of virtual elimination of mercury use and release.

NEWMOA has developed guidance for conducting school mercury audits (www.newmoa.org/prevention/mercury/schools/) and prepared curriculum for middle and high schools on the sources, uses, safety issues, and health risks associated with mercury. Through this program, NEWMOA has been working with local officials to facilitate mercury clean-outs at participating schools and to ensure that mercury-containing products are not reintroduced at the schools in the future. NEWMOA has also provided information on broader chemical inventory management and safety issues to the participating schools.

In FY 2007 NEWMOA will continue its efforts to educate school officials on the important issues associated with mercury and to facilitate mercury-free schools in Massachusetts. NEWMOA will facilitate the clean-out of Massachusetts schools in FY 2007 and lead half-day workshops for school and BOCES (Board of Cooperative Education Services) officials in New York State. NEWMOA will also complete an assessment and report addressing mercury products and feasible alternatives in schools, and assist the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection in developing outreach materials for informing schools about the requirements in the new Massachusetts mercury products legislation.

This project is funded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and the Department of Environmental Protection and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

For more information visit www.newmoa.org/prevention/mercury/schools/ or contact: Meg Wilcox, NEWMOA, (617)367-8558 x305; mwilcox@newmoa.org.