

11 Percent Reduction in Mercury Use in Products in the U.S. from 2001 to 2004, According to IMERC/NEWMOA Report

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BOSTON - The Interstate Mercury Education and Reduction Clearinghouse (IMERC), a program of the Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association (NEWMOA), published a report online today showing that mercury use in products sold in the U.S. declined from 131 tons in 2001 to 117 tons in 2004, an 11 percent reduction. The IMERC study, *Trends in Mercury Use in Products: Summary of the Interstate Mercury Education and Reduction Clearinghouse (IMERC) Mercury-added Products Database* (available at www.newmoa.org/prevention/mercury/imerc/FactSheets/index.cfm), summarizes mercury use in products sold in the United States in 2001 and 2004 from information submitted by hundreds of manufacturers of switches and relays, dental amalgam, thermostats, lamps, thermometers and other measuring devices, batteries, and chemicals. The purpose of the report is to identify trends in mercury use in these product categories and opportunities for further reductions and improvements in the collection and recycling of mercury waste from products.

Key findings include:

- Switches, relays, and dental amalgam capsules accounted for approximately 70 percent of the total mercury use in 2001 and 2004 for the U.S.
- In 2001, approximately 60 tons of mercury was sold in switches and relays, which declined to approximately 51 tons in 2004.
- Approximately 30 tons of mercury was sold in dental amalgam in 2001 and 2004, with no substantial change in the two reporting years.
- Approximately 15.5 tons and 15 tons of mercury were sold in thermostats in the U.S. in 2001 and 2004, respectively.
- In 2001, lamp manufacturers sold approximately 10.7 tons of mercury in mercury-added light bulbs. This decreased by 0.6 tons in 2004, representing a 6 percent decrease.
- Measuring devices, such as barometers, manometers, and sphygmomanometers, contained the largest amounts of mercury in individual products, and these products accounted for 4.5 percent of the total in 2001 and 4 percent of the total in 2004.
- In 2001, approximately 3 tons of mercury was used in button cell batteries, which decreased by 0.4 tons to 2.6 tons, or approximately 14 percent, in 2004.
- Product manufacturers reported that they eliminated 11.6 tons of mercury from products sold in the U.S. from 2002 to 2006.

The new report, funded by a grant from U.S. EPA, is the most recent comprehensive analysis of trends in mercury use in products sold in the U.S. over multiple reporting periods. The data used in the report is available in the Mercury-added Products Database (www.newmoa.org/prevention/mercury/imerc/Notification/index.cfm), which is managed by IMERC. Through a better understanding of the product information contained in this

IMERC database, states, local governments, and the public can focus on specific policies and programs to maximize their efforts in reducing mercury contamination in the environment.

In 2001, the NEWMOA-member states (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont) established IMERC to help them implement laws and programs aimed at reducing mercury in products, the waste stream, and the environment. Since 2001, states from outside the Northeast have joined IMERC, including California, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Washington State.

NEWMOA, IMERC's parent organization, is a non-profit, non-partisan interstate association made up of environmental agency directors from the hazardous waste, solid waste, waste site cleanup, pollution prevention, and underground storage tank programs in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Its mission is to help states articulate, promote, and implement economically sound regional programs for the enhancement of environmental protection.

Reporters/Editors Note: Additional information about IMERC and the Mercury-added Products Database can be found at www.newmoa.org/prevention/mercury/imerc.cfm.

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