



ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE

finding the ways that work

POLLUTION PREVENTION ALLIANCE

Vol. 12 No. 1

PPA Newsletter

Summer 2002

NETWORK NEWS

Maine Passes Bill To Remove Toxic Mercury From Vehicles



In April 2002, the Clean Car Campaign won a major victory in Maine when the state passed the nation's first law requiring manufacturer responsibility for the removal of toxic mercury from vehicles before they are scrapped.

Environmental Defense, the Ecology Center and other Campaign partners worked closely with the Natural Resources Council of Maine and recycling industry

representatives to ensure that this law was passed. The Maine legislation sets a landmark precedent for holding automakers responsible for the environmental and human health consequences of their design decisions. The Maine law creates a manufacturer-funded system for removing and disposing of mercury-added components, such as switches in hood and trunk lights, before vehicles are crushed or shredded for recycling.

Specific features of the bill include:

- Auto recyclers are required to remove mercury switches and mercury headlamps from cars prior to being crushed
- Effective January 1, 2003, automobile manufacturers are required to establish consolidation centers for the collection of mercury switches, pay a minimum of \$1 bounty for each switch turned in, and pay for transport and recycling of switches collected according to universal waste rules
- Other auto-related businesses (dealers, repair shops, etc.) have the option of participating in the mercury switch removal and bounty program
- The Department of Environmental Protection will provide training and conduct educational outreach to promote switch removal
- Auto makers must provide information and technical assistance to identify makes and models containing mercury switches and enable their removal and recycling
- After January 1, 2003, mercury switches are prohibited from being added to new cars sold in Maine

- A goal of 90 pounds of mercury removal per year is established to guide program evaluation.
- Detailed reporting is required to track program success and develop recommendations for program improvement

Momentum is strong now for other states to pass similar bills, and we are working within the Partnership for Mercury Free Vehicles, which includes Environmental Defense, the Ecology Center, the Automobile Recyclers Association, and the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc., to secure passage elsewhere. Massachusetts plans to introduce a similar bill imminently, and about 12 states have similar or related legislation pending.

In addition, the Partnership has drafted model federal legislation that requires vehicle manufacturers to establish and fund a system for the removal and safe management of mercury switches in vehicles. The legislation also prohibits the sale of new vehicles containing mercury switches and phases-out the use of other mercury-added vehicle components over the next few years.

For more information on state and federal mercury legislation or copies of the model legislation visit www.mercurypolicy.org/new/documents/StateandFedHgLegislation012902.pdf or contact Kevin Mills at 202-387-3500, kmills@environmentaldefense.org

The Pollution Prevention Alliance (PPA) joins Environmental Defense with regional, state, tribal, and community-based activists working to promote pollution prevention and sustainable communities in the Great Lakes region. PPA is supported by The Joyce Foundation, The Energy Foundation, the Turner Foundation and the Department of Energy.

NEW FORMAT - As part of our ongoing efforts to improve the PPA Newsletter we have decided to concentrate our reporting on the community-based monitoring and clean vehicle technology issues that PPA staff are actively involved in. We feel that by focusing the newsletter on our areas of expertise we will be able to provide more valuable and timely information to our readers. Let us know what you think.

The PPA Newsletter is published quarterly by Environmental Defense's PPA staff. Readers are encouraged to submit materials for publication. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity. Please send all submittals to:

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This issue of the PPA Newsletter is printed on Domtar: unbleached, 100% post-consumer recycled paper. Available from New York Recycled Paper at 212/645-2300.

Volunteers in 8 Cities Gear Up For Summer Ozone Monitoring Season

Citizen volunteers in 8 cities gear up to collect information about the extent to which ground-level ozone is a problem in their own neighborhoods. Local environmental leaders and residents prepare for this summer's smog monitoring season in Atlanta, Baltimore, Buffalo, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dayton, New York City, and Washington DC. Using a hand held ozone monitor device called Zikua ("visualizing the invisible" in Swahili), volunteers collect and record data on smog levels in their own backyards.

Local networks aim to empower residents to take action to reduce ozone levels by increasing public awareness about the issues associated with smog, and impacting local, state, and/or national policies. Local activists involved in the monitoring project and similar type projects met in Washington DC this month to discuss strategies for making the greatest impact at the local, state, regional, and federal level. Volunteers will be trained to collect and record data and begin monitoring during May and continue into September.

The Citizen Ozone Monitoring Network was started as a pilot in Cleveland, Ohio in the summer of 2000 and has since expanded within Cleveland and to other cities. Results indicate variation of ozone levels between neighborhoods. Data from this summer will be compared to data from previous years to verify the results and determine other trends. For more information, contact Halley Rosen at

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"Zikua's Can See What We Can't" - Written by Elio Cruz

Unlike some pollutants, we are unable to see ground level ozone pollution and often have no way of knowing that the air quality is detrimental to our health. Despite the dangers of ground level ozone (smog), we do not have sufficient information to know how to protect our health at the local neighborhood level. In an effort to provide access to otherwise unavailable information, Gary Short of Vistanomics developed Zikua (which means, "Visualizing the Invisible" in Swahili).

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) works in collaboration with Vistanomics to research the development of the new technology and calibrate the monitors. NASA also leads a project of the Global and Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) program, an Al Gore initiative to teach students around the world about environmental monitoring. Zikua's are currently being used in GLOBE schools.

MONITORING PROJECTS AND RELATED NEWS

Smog May Cause Asthma!

For the first time, researches determined that children who breathe heavily polluted air are much more likely to develop asthma. The decade long study released on January 31, 2002 was conducted by the University of Southern

California and sponsored by the California Environmental Protection Agency's Air Resources Board. Scientists claim that this study is the strongest evidence yet that smog cannot only aggravate existing childhood asthma, but may actually be one of the causes of the disease.

The study, published in *The Lancet* journal, compared new asthma cases in 3,353 children who were followed over five years of the ten year study in twelve Southern California communities. Researchers also focused on children who participated in active sports and found that 265 of the children who lived in the most polluted areas were diagnosed with asthma during the study. Asthma is currently the leading serious chronic illness among youth, afflicting about 9 million children in the United States. These new findings could mean that the numbers could rise due to smog pollution.

The Bush administration must take this study into account as the standards for emissions from refineries and factories are reviewed and as the new more stringent ground level ozone standards are implemented. The findings apply not only to the Los Angeles region, but to other heavily polluted areas across the entire nation and consequently should be considered in federal decision making.

Study Links Air Pollution to Lung Cancer

A new study was released on March 5, 2002 linking smog to life-threatening illnesses, including lung cancer. Researchers from Brigham Young

University, the University of Ottawa, New York University, and the American Cancer Society conducted the study and found that people living in smoggy cities across the United States are more likely to die of lung cancer, heart attacks, and respiratory failure than people in communities with cleaner air.

By tracking 500,000 adults for 16 years in 156 cities across the country, research shows that people in the smoggiest cities in the US are said to face a malignancy rate of 20% greater than those living in less polluted communities. The study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, lends support for more stringent air pollution regulations for ultra fine particulate matter and ground level ozone.

New York State Officials Sue Western NY Company Over Alleged Clean Air Act Violations

New York state officials filed a lawsuit in January 2002, against Niagara Mohawk Holdings, Inc. and NRG Energy, Inc. alleging violations of the Clean Air Act at two coal-burning plants in western New York. The plants in Chautauqua and Erie counties disproportionately emit nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide compared to all other power plants in the state.

The firms made modifications at the power plants without upgrading air pollution controls on the smokestacks, as required by law. This is one step in the right direction, however, more should be done to ensure that the Clean Air Act is vigorously enforced within New York and all other states.

New Power Plants Proposed for Minnesota Promise a Load of Air Pollution

A slew of new coal-burning power plants proposed for Northeastern Minnesota could bring hundreds of jobs, but will also bring more air pollution. The plants would generate tons of acid rain-causing sulfur dioxide and nitric oxide, particulates and ozone that cause respiratory problems, pounds of mercury that contaminate fish, and carbon dioxide that contributes to global warming.

Opponents to the plants counter that there are cleaner alternatives to meet the region's energy and economic needs, while supporters claim that the environmental and health impacts will be minimal. However, it is determined that the projects would increase air pollution locally, regionally, and even globally. According to Minnesotans for an Energy Efficient Economy, half of the increased energy need in the state could be met through conservation and the other half through wind power and natural gas plants. Wind only provides about 2% of the state's power, but 20 % of Minnesota's energy needs could be met with wind-powered generation by 2020.

Safe Hometowns Initiative

The Safe Hometowns Initiative, a coalition of groups pressing for a reduction of hazards at chemical facilities, met in Washington in May. According to the group, there are 300,000 facilities in the U.S. that produce or use dangerous chemicals.

The Initiative argues that in addition to increasing security, the nation would be safer if we increased safety by reducing the presence and use of hazardous chemicals. Since facilities are vulnerable in an air attack or bombing, increasing armed security, which is where EPA and the American Chemistry Council (ACC) have placed their focus, is not going to substantially increase safety.

The meeting follows the release in March of the Safe Hometowns Guide, The Guide is designed to help communities understand local risks and work with facilities to adopt safer alternatives. The Guide is available on the Internet at <http://www.safehometowns.org/>.

For more information about the Safe Home Towns Initiative or Environmental Defense's work on hazard reduction, contact Carol Andress at 202-387-3500 or candress@environmentaldefense.org.

CLEAN CAR CAMPAIGN AND RELATED NEWS

Clean Car Campaign Shows the Auto Industry How to "Switch-the-Switch" and Take Toxic Mercury of Their Vehicles

For years, the automotive industry has used mercury in a variety of applications, most commonly electrical switches for convenience lights and 4WD antilock brakes.

Despite promises to phase out the use of mercury switches and the availability of practical, low-cost, mercury-free alternatives, the U.S. automakers were slow to act. Ford only completed its mercury switch phase-out in 2001, and GM and DaimlerChrysler continue to use mercury switches in a limited number of vehicles. In model year 2000, U.S. passenger vehicles still contained more than 10,000 pounds of mercury.

In the U.S. approximately 11 million vehicles are retired and recycled each year. With no effective removal and management system in place, the mercury-containing components of these vehicles remain unaccounted for, meaning that much (if not all) of this mercury may end up in the environment. By one estimate, 10 tons of mercury was released into the environment in 2000 alone from these older vehicles.

To demonstrate to the auto industry that there are efficient and cost-effective ways to properly manage the mercury in vehicles currently on the road, the Clean Car Campaign kicked off its national "Switch-the-Switch" campaign on November 13, 2001. In coordination with auto dealerships, city and state agencies and environmental organizations at 13 locations across the country, the Switch-the-Switch events replaced convenience lighting mercury switches in vehicles currently on the road with mercury-free alternatives.

As you know, the Clean Car Campaign believes it is the automakers' responsibility to remove and properly manage the mercury contained in their products. This includes both the

immediate elimination of all automotive uses of mercury in new cars and trucks, and the removal, collection, and recovery of existing mercury in the vehicles already on the road. These events and others across the country demonstrate that a replacement system for mercury switches in vehicles already on the road can work. However, to effectively address the nation's mercury problem and protect human health, the participation of auto manufacturers is essential.

In an effort to hold manufacturers responsible, the Campaign has teamed up with the Partnership for Mercury-Free Vehicles. Together, these groups are pursuing state and federal legislation that would require U.S. automakers to remove toxic mercury from their products and take responsibility for the health impacts of their design choices.

To find out more about the Clean Car Campaign's ongoing state and federal efforts visit www.cleancarcampaign.org or contact Dean Menke at Environmental Defense, 202-387-3500, dmenke@environmentaldefense.org.

Fuel Economy Standards Stall in Congress but Advanced Vehicle Tax Credits Progress

The U.S. Senate passed an Energy Bill in April that would effectively do nothing about fleetwide fuel economy - now at a 20 year low-- by rejecting meaningful, achievable increases in fuel economy standards. Instead, an amendment sponsored by Senators Carl Levin (D-MI) and Kit Bond (R-MO)

refers the issue to the Department of Transportation, which already had the authority to address standards for light trucks. The Senate bill actually makes it more difficult for regulators to act by raising procedural hurdles and exempting pick-up trucks from any future fuel economy improvements. The Senate's stance on this issue was a loss for the environment and for our energy security. The House of Representatives took a similarly unhelpful stance when it passed its own energy package last summer.

A bright spot in the otherwise troublesome Senate energy package was the passage of consumer tax credits for advanced technology vehicles that meet stringent environmental performance standards. The Clean Car Campaign and allies worked to ensure that this provision ties credits to the degree of oil savings and clean air benefits. Hybrid-electric, fuel cell, battery-electric, and alternative fuel vehicles all will be eligible for credits if this provision is signed into law.

The House of Representatives passed a related provision, but it was laden with amendments that undermined the environmental intentions of the measure. We will let you know in the coming months if there are opportunities for you to help ensure that the positive Senate version takes precedence over the unhelpful House counterpart as Congress works to reconcile their respective energy packages.

To find out more about the Energy Bill contact Kevin Mills at Environmental

Defense, 202-387-3500,
kmills@environmentaldefense.org.

Honda Markets Another Hybrid Vehicle that Approaches Clean Car Standard

Honda is now selling a gas-electric hybrid version of its popular Civic through dealerships across the country. The Model Year 2003 Hybrid Civic performs well against our Clean Car Standard, achieving 49 miles per gallon (combined city and highway driving) and meeting the ultra-low emitting vehicle tailpipe standard. That is more than 1-1/2 times the average fuel economy for compact cars, with tailpipe emissions that meet the cleanest current national rating.

This car also performs very well on the road and is outfitted with "top-of-the-line" features such as automatic climate control and a higher quality interior. Hybrids run on conventional fuel and never need to be plugged in, and the Hybrid Civic can travel over 600 miles on a tank of gas. It costs approximately \$19,550 with a manual transmission, or \$20,550 with an automatic transmission.

This is the first time that a car meeting these environmental performance criteria has been available as an optional version of an already popular vehicle line. Honda plans to sell 2,000 Hybrid Civics per month, and Toyota will soon increase Prius sales to nearly 1,500 per month. For more information, visit <http://civichybrid.honda.com/>.

RESOURCES

Darkening Skies- Trends Toward Increasing Power Plant Emissions

Clear the Air: The Campaign to Stop Dirty Power (a coalition of the Clean Air Task Force, the National Environmental Trust, and the US Public Interest Research Group) issued this new report examining utility emissions catalogued on EPA's acid rain program database. The study concludes that despite a nationwide reduction of pollutants traded by power plants seeking the cheapest reductions, the number of people living in non-attainment areas has increased from 110 million to 121 million since 1999. For a copy of the report, visit www.clearthair.org, or contact the Clean Air Task Force at 617-292-0234, info@clnatf.org.

Save Oil, Take the Patriot's Pledge!

If you would like another way to express your support for saving fuel, you can take the Patriot's Pledge: <http://www.saveabarrel.org>.

The Patriot's Pledge is a campaign to help Americans reduce our dependence on oil by taking personal steps to meet our transportation needs in more fuel-efficient ways. By taking the pledge, you will save at the pump, help the environment and make our nation more secure.

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