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Industry News

California Product Stewardship Council Announces a New Law to Provide Free Mercury Thermostat Recycling

The California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) is proud to announce a new law designed to protect public health and reduce taxpayer costs through the collection of mercury thermostats. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin. Each year in the U.S., as many as 630,000 infants are born with mercury levels associated with IQ loss. CPSC and Sierra Club California co-sponsored The Mercury Thermostat Collection Act of 2008 (AB2347), authored by Assemblymember Ira Ruskin, Redwood City.

"The Thermostat Recycling Corporation was formed voluntarily by producers to collect thermostats, however the program has only collected about 5-percent of what becomes waste annually," said Heidi Sanborn, CPSC Executive Director. "AB2347 will increase the number of collection points and make recycling more convenient."

Sanborn praised the efforts of Honeywell International Inc., as part of the TRC, and the California Retailers Association for supporting the recycling legislation. When the law takes effect, July 1, 2009, heating and air conditioning wholesalers with physical locations in California, will be required to collect thermostats from the public. Retailers are also encouraged to participate.

"Most California consumers want to do the right thing, but until now they have not had the information or opportunity to recycle mercury thermostats, many of which contain three grams of mercury," said Bill Magavern, Director of Sierra Club California.

"Having the producers fund and manage the collection system is in line with the overall framework for an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system adopted by the California Integrated Waste Management Board in January 2008 and the recommendation of the Green Chemistry Report from the University of California Centers for Occupational and Environmental Health," said Sanborn.

The CPSC is an organization of local governments and other partners, formed to support development of EPR policy and its implementation. EPR is a policy whereby product manufacturers are responsible for the life cycle of their products. CPSC's mission is to shift California's product waste management system from one focused on government funded and ratepayer financed waste diversion to one that relies on producer responsibility in order to reduce public costs and drive improvements in product design that promote environmental sustainability.

For more information about CPSC, call Heidi Sanborn at 916-402-3911, or go to <http://www.CalPSC.org>.

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