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Author: Maria Victoria Peeler

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ABSTRACT

“Measuring the Impacts of Mercury Reduction in Waste & Products Programs”

Maria Victoria Peeler, Washington State Mercury Reduction Coordinator

Washington State embarked on an ambitious PBT Strategy in 2000, and identified mercury as the first PBT chemical targeted to be “virtually eliminated” through a mercury reduction action plan*. The Mercury Chemical Action Plan (MCAP) was approved by the legislature in 2003, and some funding was provided to the Department of Ecology (Ecology), and the Department of Health (DOH), so existing regulatory authorities could be used to direct and educate the public in the reduction of improper use and disposal of mercury.

The MCAP identified primary sources of use and release of mercury to the environment, and that list has been used to identify reasonable target “**success measures**”. Ecology estimates that about 3,800 to 5,000 pounds of mercury are released into the state’s environment each year from human sources. Our success measures target a reduction of mercury in the environment ranging from 1,110-1,260 lbs/yr. Using Washington’s Governor Gregoire’s **performance measures*** initiatives*, Ecology enhanced the accuracy of the estimated reduction targets based on national and local data, like King County’s.* Ecology has found that setting these performance measures helps us focus our priorities, and increase our chances of success. But these measures also identified for us how difficult it is to measure releases from medium and small quantity generators, and household waste, as well as quantifiable reduction in use and proper disposal. A brief description of how some of these success measures have been tracked will be presented.

* For more information on Government Management, Accountability and Performance (GMAP) in, visit <http://www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/policy/gmap/>

* For more information on mercury and King County, visit <http://www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/facilities/news.asp>

* For more information on Washington State’s Department of Ecology’s PBT Strategy and MCAP, visit <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/eap/pbt/pbtfaq.html>