

1997 NEG/ECP

RESOLUTION ON MERCURY

Whereas, mercury is a persistent bioaccumulative toxin that has required the issuance of fish consumption advisories to protect public health in the New England states and Eastern Canadian provinces;

Whereas, mercury is a transboundary air pollutant that calls for coordinated regional, national, and international efforts to minimize mercury contamination to the environment;

Whereas, the release of mercury into the environment from human activities and deposition into sensitive ecosystems poses health threats to children, undermines the productivity and safety of fisheries, and diminishes the economic benefits of tourism in the region;

Whereas, submission of the U.S. EPA's Mercury Study to Congress has been delayed thus holding up the public release of vital data and findings, the New England states and Eastern Canadian provinces have undertaken a collaborative effort to characterize mercury emission sources, transboundary mercury deposition, and public health impacts from mercury contamination;

Whereas, the U.S. and Canada have jointly agreed in the Bilateral Air Quality Agreement, Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and Virtual Elimination of Persistent Toxic Substances in the Great Lakes Basin to control transboundary emissions and to co-operate on research and development projects to eliminate toxic substances including mercury;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Conference charges its Committee on the Environment to:

- continue to advance the understanding of mercury in this region and support the timely completion of the Northeast/Eastern Canadian Mercury Study;
- support co-operative action in this region to begin to address mercury releases and resulting public health and environment impacts;
- meet with the appropriate experts and officials to share information on emissions, monitoring, public health and ecological assessments of mercury and examine pollution prevention and control opportunities to reduce emissions in New England and Eastern Canada;
- develop a Mercury Action Plan, based on the outcome of the meeting, that will incorporate routine updating of the science and monitoring information for the region and voluntary approach to reducing emissions and discharges to the environment;
- present the findings of the meeting and proposed action plan at the 1998 annual meeting of the NEG/ECP.