

Rhode Island Mercury Advisory Working Group Mercury Commission Sub-Group on Auto Parts

Meeting Minutes from September 29, 2004

2:30-4:00 pm

RI DEM, Conference Room B

Attendees:

Chairwoman Sheila Dormody (RI CWA), Elizabeth Stone (RI DEM), Terry Gray (RI DEM), Eugenia Marks (RI Audubon Society), Jamie Magnani (RILOCAT), Jack Hogan (Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers), Paul D'Adamo (Automotive Recyclers Association of Rhode Island), Greg Benick and Chris Reilly.

Called to order by Sheila Dormody, Sub-Group Chair, at 2:35 pm.

Introduction & Review Agenda & Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Sub-Group reviewed and approved September 8, 2004 meeting minutes as drafted. All present voted to approve.
- Chairwoman Dormody asked if there are any suggested changes to the meeting agenda – none were offered.
- The sub-group welcomed Greg Benick and Chris Reilly to the discussion for the first time. Both indicated they saw the notice for the commission meetings on the Mercury Commission website and decided they wanted to join in on the discussion.

Presentation and Discussion Led by Jack Hogan Representing AAM

- Jack Hogan apologized to the group for not having the materials he previously promised – citing the recent lawsuit in CA on Cal-Lev standards as a recent, time-consuming priority for AAM.
- Began discussion about two other states' voluntary auto-mercury collection programs: New York and Michigan. Jack Hogan also discussed recent happenings in New Jersey on the mercury front. Discussion focused primarily on *voluntary* switch removal programs.
- Jack Hogan discussed the merits of examining these types of programs before determining best approach for RI automobiles.
- It was suggested that people might want to look through the NEWMOA website for additional information on mercury in cars (e.g. which cars have what amount of mercury in various components).
- Discussion of the flow of vehicles into/out of Metals Recycling (Johnston, RI). Could RI mercury regulations be amended in such a way that would prohibit Metals Recycling from shredding cars unless they could show all mercury switches had been removed from the vehicles? Discussion.
- Greg Benick indicated he would forward numbers regarding the number of vehicles that pass through Metals Recycling each month – he indicated it might be as high as 700 cars a day.

Additional Discussion – Final Report, To-Do Items, Etc.

- Additional discussion about the magnitude of the mercury problem relative to automobiles. Jack Hogan asked if it was necessary that we look at and take this issue on in one big bite - or can we be more strategic and begin with a pilot program? Asked that we look at these other pilot programs in other states before reaching a final decision on RI.
- Discussion of record keeping problems with Maine “switch the switch” program. Is \$1 bounty too low for this type of activity (removal, recycling and appropriate record keeping)?
- Commission member Eugenia Marks asked if anyone has looked at the possibility of removing switches at the point of inspection (which happens every two years)? She indicated this would be a quick way to remove many remaining mercury switches out of the population of vehicles still in service.
- Discussion about the merits/problems associated with waiting until the “end of the useful life” of the car to remove switches. Further discussion of the MI auto mercury report - suggested we may want to focus on fleets of vehicles (an issue that was already discussed at the last sub-group meeting). Discussion about the number of cars still on the road that contain mercury – it is estimated by some that ½ of the cars still on the road contain mercury switches.
- Discussion of “newer” uses of mercury in cars: HID lights (.5 milligrams of mercury in each headlight) and Navigation systems (2 milligrams of mercury). This is much lower than the typical mercury switch, which can easily contain 1 gram of mercury.
- Discussion of the merits of outright banning the sale of vehicles in RI that contain mercury. Jack Hogan indicated that AAM would oppose such a move – the sale of vehicles in the RI market would move across the border into nearly MA and CT. He reminded the group that we’re talking about an “international market” when it comes to vehicles sold in the US.
- Discussion by Sheila Dormody about the EU’s efforts to minimize mercury in cars and other electronic products.
- Discussion about retirement percentages for cars in RI. Terry Gray indicated that approximately 6.5% of all vehicles in RI are retired each year.
- Discussion of final report and potential recommendations to be included in the report: brainstorming session.

Breakdown of Possible Recommendations

MANDATORY PROGRAMS/SOLUTIONS

- Require switch collection at vehicle end of life.
- Provide economic incentives for switch removal/collection
Options:
 - ▶ Manufacturer funded and developed system approved by DEM
 - ▶ State funded system developed by DEM
- Education program regarding collection requirement
Options:
 - ▶ By manufacturer
 - ▶ By DEM

- Require mercury switch replacement at safety/emissions inspections.
- Require labeling of mercury containing auto parts.
- Phase-out mercury-added auto parts in cars sold in RI.
- Establish goals for switch collection at vehicle end of life.
- Enforcement mechanism
 - ▶ Penalties for violations

VOLUNTARY PROGRAMS/SOLUTIONS

- *Switch the Switch* (outreach)
 - ▶ Awards programs
 - ▶ Focus on fleet vehicles
(will require a collection program)
- Recycler collection program
- Education/outreach program
- Pilot project (short/long term)

Discussion of Future Meetings

- Next Meeting set for Wednesday October 27th at DEM (4th floor) @ 2:30 pm. Chair Dormody asked that all participants be ready to discuss/vote on final recommendations at this next meeting.
- Agenda and meeting minutes from today's meeting forthcoming.

Adjournment

Chairwoman Dormody adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:00 pm.

Recorded by:

*Elizabeth S. Stone
RI DEM*