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Mercury Thermostat Recycling Law – Supporting Compliance

Free Webinar for Local Governments, Contractors, and HVAC Wholesalers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director, 916-480-9010, Heidi@CalPSC.org

(Sacramento, CA – December 2, 2009) California's first producer responsibility law, AB2347, the Mercury Thermostat Collection Act of 2008, went into effect July 1, 2009. The law relieves local governments of the cost and responsibility for recycling mercury thermostats by requiring thermostat manufacturers to establish, manage, and fund a product stewardship system. The California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) is hosting a webinar on December 16th to provide an overview of the law and explain how local governments can help their local heating, air conditioning, and ventilation (HVAC) wholesalers and contractors meet their legal obligations. The webinar is free to local governments, HVAC wholesalers and contractors in California. Email bonnie@calpsc.org to register.

Under the new law, the former manufacturers of mercury thermostats must collect and properly recycle unwanted mercury thermostats at no cost to contractors and homeowners. The not-for-profit Thermostat Recycling Corporation (TRC), funded by thermostat manufacturers, is implementing a statewide collection and recycling program in California, in compliance with AB 2347.

HVAC wholesalers and contractors have legal obligations under the new law as well. Every HVAC wholesaler with a physical location in California is required to act as a collection site for waste mercury thermostats. In California, TRC provides collection containers, shipping, and recycling services to HVAC wholesalers for a nominal, one-time fee. TRC provides the same services to Household Hazardous waste programs, free of charge. Contractors who install heating, ventilation, and air conditioning components and who remove out-of-service mercury thermostats are legally required to take them to a collection location for recycling.

CPSC and Sierra Club California co-sponsored AB2347 and are assisting TRC by informing local governments and stakeholders about the law and its requirements. "AB2347 is California's first producer responsibility legislation and we want to make sure that all stakeholders understand how easy it is to ensure the success of this program" said Heidi Sanborn, executive director of CPSC.

Mercury thermostats historically dominated the market, but have been banned from sale in California since 2006. On average, each mercury thermostat contains approximately three grams of

mercury, a toxic liquid metal. When released into the atmosphere, mercury can be transported long distances. Mercury that is deposited in aquatic ecosystems can be converted into methylmercury, an especially toxic form. Methylmercury can accumulate in fish and in humans who eat contaminated fish.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

California Product Stewardship Council: <http://www.CalPSC.org>

Thermostat Recycling Corporation: <http://www.thermostat-recycle.org/>

Sierra Club California: <http://www.sierraclubcalifornia.org/>

CA Department of Toxic Substance Control:

http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Mercury_Therm_Act.cfm

FUTURE WEBINARS: This is the first in a new series of webinars to be offered by CPSC. For information on future webinars go to the CPSC homepage at <http://www.calpsc.org>.