

EPA News Release

Contact: Domenic Calabro, EPA Waste Reduction, (206) 553-6640 / calabro.domenic@epa.gov
Suzanne Skadowski, EPA Public Affairs, (206) 553-6689 / skadowski.suzanne@epa.gov

Washington Department of Ecology Leads on Reducing Toxics, Joins EPA's Partnership

(Seattle, Washington – October 27, 2008) Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) welcomed Washington's Department of Ecology (Ecology) into the National Partnership for Environmental Priorities (NPEP). This is a voluntary program that encourages public and private organizations to reduce the use or release of 31 priority toxic chemicals beyond what is required by environmental regulations.

Under Washington's Mercury Chemical Action Plan, Ecology has committed to reducing mercury from a statewide baseline by almost 300 pounds per year by 2010. Ecology will also be voluntarily eliminating lead wheel weights from agency fleet vehicles by 2009, preventing over 200 pounds of highly-toxic lead from being released into the environment.

“Joining EPA's NPEP program is consistent with the cutting edge work Ecology is doing to protect public health and the environment,” said Elin Miller, EPA regional administrator. “From being a leader on statewide chemical policies -like their Chemical Action Plans- to developing a West Coast States collaborative on chemicals of concern and safer alternatives, Ecology is on the environmental forefront.”

“Reducing toxics use in Washington State is critical to a cleaner environment and strong economy,” said Darin Rice, Program Manager of Ecology's Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program. “Hundreds of Washington businesses have saved money and increased their competitive advantage through reducing their use of toxic chemicals.”

EPA's NPEP program goal is to work with states and industry to reduce the use or release of the 31 priority chemicals by four million pounds by 2011. There are over 180 NPEP enrollees nationally. Ecology is EPA's sixth partner in Region 10 (Alaska, Oregon, Idaho and Washington) and only the fourth state environmental agency to join EPA's NPEP program. Today's announcement took place at the 8th Annual Environmental Performance Track State and Regional Conference in Seattle.

For more information about Ecology's Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program, visit: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/index.html>

For more information about EPA's NPEP program, visit:
<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/partnerships/npep/index.htm>

###

Subscribe to automatically receive Region 10 News Releases via email at:
http://www.govdocs.com/service/subscribe.html?code=USEPA_C19