

03/00 TUE 14:59 FAX 202 224 7042

PERM SUBCOM INVEST

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 3, 2000

The Honorable William S. Cohen
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Cohen:

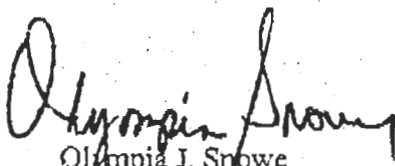
We are writing to offer our strong support for Governor King's letter of September 26, 2000, requesting that the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) accept mercury from the HoltraChem Manufacturing Company. We share the concerns raised in the Governor's letter about the grave health and environmental concerns associated with mercury, and agree on the need to prevent this large amount of mercury from being sold on the market and potentially released into Maine's environment.


DLA, which currently manages more than 9.7 million pounds of mercury at five locations in the United States, is the only agency that currently has the facilities, experience, and expertise to handle mercury. This proposal offers the Department of Defense the opportunity to help promote the mercury reduction strategies of state and federal agencies. Both the Environmental Protection Agency and Maine's Department of Environmental Protection strongly back the retirement of the HoltraChem mercury but do not have the facilities to hold the mercury. The New England Governors Conference recently passed a resolution calling for coordination with federal agencies "to ensure that large quantities of stockpiled or recovered mercury are permanently retired."

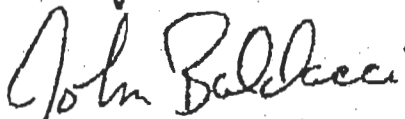
We urge you to expedite the examination and response to this issue given that HoltraChem has already begun to shut down its facility.


Thank you for consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


Olympia J. Snowe
U.S. Senator


Susan M. Collins
U.S. Senator


John E. Baldacci
Member of Congress


Thomas H. Allen
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Carol Browner, EPA



ANGUS S. KING, JR.
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

October 3, 2000

The Honorable Olympia J. Snowe
United States Senator
495 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1902

Olympia,
Dear Senator ~~Snowe~~

I seek your help on a very important matter. The HoltraChem Manufacturing Company recently ceased production at its chlor-alkali plant in Orrington, Maine, and over the course of the next few weeks will be collecting the approximately 260,000 pounds of mercury used or stored at the facility. As I'm sure you know, contamination of our surface waters and fisheries from mercury is a serious problem in Maine. The metal is already widespread and persistent in the environment, and one organic form (Methylmercury) is a neurotoxin capable of posing substantial risks to children and developing fetuses at very low concentrations.

Reducing the threat of mercury contamination has been a high priority for the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers, and there are many actions underway to accomplish this objective. Removing mercury from circulation is part of this effort.

Accordingly, on September 26, 2000, I wrote to Defense Secretary Cohen seeking his assistance to add the HoltraChem mercury to the approximately 9.7 million pounds of mercury in existing stockpiles managed by the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). In doing so, we would maintain the option of retiring this mercury in an extremely cost effective manner. Indeed, DLA is already planning to evaluate management options for the mercury in its existing stockpiles, including retirement. As uses for mercury decline and the recycling of mercury increases, this retirement evaluation will become an important part of a federal mercury strategy.

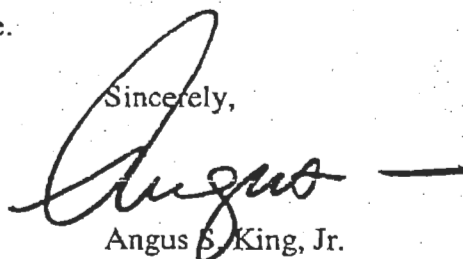
While I still await a formal response from the Department of Defense, we have been told informally that DLA may require Congressional authorization to accept the mercury. I recognize there may not be much time left before Congress adjourns, but I would greatly appreciate your help in obtaining whatever authorization is needed so that DLA may receive and assume ownership and control of the mercury. Prompt attention to this issue is needed because of the speed at which HoltraChem is closing its facility.

Senior officials of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in both the New England Region and Washington headquarters have expressed support for this undertaking. We continue to be in close communication with them.

I look forward to working with you on this important endeavor. David Lennett, Director of the Bureau of Remediation and Waste Management (207-287-7890), and Deborah Garrett, Commissioner's office (207-287-7830) at the Maine Department of Environmental Protection are the lead staff contacts for the State of Maine.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angus".

Angus S. King, Jr.
Governor

*Sorry this comes so late, but it
would be great if you could help -*