

**QUICKSILVER CAUCUS (QSC) PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGEMENT  
OF COMMODITY GRADE ELEMENTAL MERCURY  
May 24, 2007**

These guiding principles were developed by the QSC. The QSC encompasses the environmental position on mercury from the Environmental Council of States, the National Governor's Association and state associations representing air, water, waste, and pollution prevention. These principles were assembled to facilitate development of comprehensive and effective activities including consideration in Federal and state legislation, state and national regulations/policies in the United States and international agreements and or regulations/policies for improved management of elemental mercury in an environmentally secure manner. These principles include:

- 1) The manufacture and sale of non-essential uses of mercury-added products should be phased out in the long-term. Several mercury-added products can be phased-out in the next three to five years including most uses of thermometers, manometers, thermostats, switches, relays and novelty items.
- 2) The best opportunities for achieving this goal will be to aggressively pursue multi-stakeholder partnerships, educate consumers and businesses and leverage federal and state environmental laws and regulations to accelerate such a reduction.
- 3) Reuse of elemental mercury should only be utilized in processes or products deemed essential. Few essential uses remain, but include fluorescent and compact fluorescent lamps, some restorations with dental amalgam, and perhaps a select few scientific pieces of equipment. For those uses of mercury that continue, capture and recycling of mercury-containing products at the end of their useful life should be required.
  - a. The United Nations Environment Programme estimates that globally, use of mercury in lamps and dentistry represent less than 15% of total uses, or even as little as 9%. Research should be conducted to determine whether there are any countries that do not have sufficient domestic sources of secondary (recycled) mercury for these purposes.
  - b. Federal and state governments should work with manufacturers to ensure adequate nationwide infrastructure exists for safe collection, storage and disposal of used mercury-containing lamps and other products through a product stewardship framework. This infrastructure should provide flexibility for States to maintain and to continue to develop, and implement their own strategies or regulatory programs.
  - c. Research should be supported to find safe alternatives to elemental mercury in those products deemed essential.
- 4) Research should also be conducted on the use and export of mercury compounds, including such mercury compounds as mercuric chloride and mercuric oxide, and in finding safe alternatives.
- 5) States and the federal government should continue to work with manufacturing sectors to address current and legacy uses of mercury in the manufacturing process (e.g.,

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working with the chlor-alkali manufacturers to identify alternatives to mercury cell technology and where feasible, phasing out the use of the “mercury cell” manufacturing process).

- 6) Following the collection and recycling (retorting) of used mercury-containing products, the mercury should be sequestered and safely stored within the United States.
- 7) The United States should support mechanisms to better track international trade of mercury, mercury compounds, and mercury-containing products.
- 8) The United States should be a leader in proper use and management of elemental mercury by not exporting any mercury-containing products to other countries unless it is related to an essential use. Exporting surplus elemental mercury to developing countries where it can result in unsafe exposure should be prohibited. Elemental mercury should only be exported to other countries for essential uses where it can be demonstrated that the country does not have sufficient domestic sources of secondary (recycled) mercury.
- 9) The United States should prohibit imports of elemental mercury and mercury-containing products, unless the import is for sequestration.
- 10) Until a safe disposal technique is developed, temporary storage of elemental mercury should be in a safe, secure, continuously monitored location. Industries that generate significant amounts of elemental mercury should be responsible for the storage of their own mercury until a long-term solution in the United States is identified and implemented. Additionally, long-term federal research seeking ways to permanently and safely dispose of elemental mercury should be supported.
- 11) The United States should assist other countries in phasing out uses and applications of mercury and help them identify safe storage techniques to use for their mercury stockpiles until a long-term solution is identified and implemented.
- 12) The USEPA and states need to work together to track changes in the use of mercury-added products to measure the sources and amount of mercury that is collected. This needs to be correlated with (a) monitoring the releases of mercury to air, water, and land and (b) monitoring of fish tissue.
- 13) The Congress or the President should establish a National Advisory Committee to develop a comprehensive report that incorporates the principles set forth in this document and make recommendations for action by governments, industry, academia, and citizens and a time table for doing so.
- 14) The federal government should ensure that there is adequate funding to support the above mercury reduction activities at the federal, state, and local community levels of government as appropriate.