

Turning up the Heat II – Press coverage

April 2013

Trade Publications:

Environmental Expert - [Toxic Mercury from discarded thermostats continues to pollute: Manufacturers' recycling programs found to be ineffective in most states](#) – 4/3/13

Haz Mat Management - [Thermostat mercury continues to plague US waters](#) – 4/3/13

Waste Recycling News - [Study finds mercury thermostat recycling in most states to be ineffective](#) – 4/3/13

Environmental Leader - [Manufacturers' Thermostat Recycling Programs Fall Short](#) – 4/4/13

GreenWire - [MASSACHUSETTS: Enviro call for stronger oversight in mercury recycling bill](#) – 4/3/13

Vermont:

Burlington Free Press - [Vermont ranks No. 1 in mercury thermostat returns: Report says cash incentives help but voluntary recycling programs are not doing enough to keep hazardous mercury out of the environment](#) – 4/3/13

Fox 44/ABC22 - [Report: VT Leads Country in Collecting Discarded Mercury Thermostats](#) – 4/3/13

Vt Digger - [Vermont leads nation in collecting discarded mercury thermostats](#) – 4/3/13

The Eagle - [Vermont leads U.S. in collecting discarded mercury thermostats](#) – 4/3/13

The Associated Press, Times Argus, Rutland Herald, Valley News,- Vt. tops nation in removing mercury thermostats, <http://www.timesargus.com/article/20130407/THISJUSTIN/704079925> – 4/7/13

Texas:

Public News Service - [Mercury Thermostat Collection Programs Failing in Texas, U.S.](#) – 4/5/13

Maine:

Maine Public Broadcasting Network - [Report: Mercury-Recycling Program Working](#) – 4/3/13

New York:

Times Union – [Advocates turn up heat](#) – 4/4/13

Politics on the Hudson - [Environmental activists want mercury thermostats recycled](#) – 4/3/13

Massachusetts:

Boston Globe (State House News Service) – [Groups slam bill on mercury woes](#) – 4/2/13

New England Public Radio - [Environmental Report Criticizes Massachusetts Legislation Mandating Recycling Of Mercury-Containing Thermostats](#) – 4/3/13

AP, Worcester Telegraph & Gazette- **Vt. Leads Anti-Mercury Effort,**
<http://www.telegram.com/article/20130407/NEWS/104079826/1052/RSS01&source=rss> – 4/7/13

Advocates turn up heat

Group wants mercury recycling program to become state law

By [Brian Nearing](#)

Published 9:23 pm, Wednesday, April 3, 2013 *Albany*

An industry-created voluntary system to recycle toxic mercury from old thermostats is allowing too many to get into the trash and pollute the environment, according to a coalition of environmental groups at the Capitol on Wednesday.

Sales of the thermostats containing mercury were phased out under state law starting in 2005, but millions remain in use.

Hundreds of thousands of thermostats are discarded each year, most in unsafe ways, said [Laura Haight](#) of the [New York Public Interest Research Group](#). The solution is a state law requiring mandatory recycling, advocates said.

The coalition is renewing its efforts for a law after the state Assembly passed a thermostat recycling bill for the last three legislative sessions. A Senate version of the bill passed last year, but differences between the bills were never reconciled.

An old-style thermostat contains a seventh of an ounce of mercury — about 400 times more than an energy-efficient compact fluorescent light bulb. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that can harm children and developing fetuses.

A decade of voluntary recycling has captured just 8 percent of mercury thermostats coming out of service across the country, according to a report released by NYPIRG, the [Multi-State Mercury Products Campaign](#) and the state [Product Stewardship Institute](#).

"Clearly, the industry's voluntary collection system is not working," said [Andrew Radin](#), chairman of the [New York Product Stewardship Council](#). "The solution: a mandatory collection law with financial incentives and performance standards for recovery of mercury thermostats, as well as enhanced public education and outreach requirements."

Most used thermostats are handled by contractors who removed them during building renovations. "We got about 150 thermostats here last year ... It used to be larger when the program first started, about 300-400 a year," said [Janet Buckmiller](#), branch manager at [Sid Harvey Industries](#), a heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration wholesale company in the village of Colonie.

Sid Harvey is one of 10 recycling centers located within 30 miles of the Capitol, according to the recycling corporation's website. Nine of the centers are for contractors, while one, at the Bethlehem town highway garage, is for homeowners.

Wednesday's report ranked New York 37th in nationwide thermostat recycling, at a rate of about 1 percent. In 2011, New York was estimated to have recycled about 3,400 thermostats (out of 300,000

estimated to have been removed), which was a fraction of the rate of leading states like Vermont and Maine, which have laws that require recycling goals and pay \$5 for each thermostat turned in. In Rhode Island, which adopted a recycling law in 2010, the rate jumped 400 percent the following year

The latest figure is less than the 3,700 thermostats reported recycled in New York in 2008, the last year that the corporation reported figures. Haight said the corporation stopped releasing complete state-by-state recycling data in 2010 because it reflected poorly on the program.

Absent tough recycling requirements, the majority of removed thermostats in New York likely end up as trash, Haight said. Some may be sent to one of the state's 10 refuse incinerators, which contain mercury in their emissions.

She called the voluntary program "an industry smokescreen" that was masking its ineffectiveness. When NYPIRG last studied the issue in 2010, New York ranked 30th in recycling. "We are slipping even further behind," she said.

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Collection programs

According to the industry group Thermostat Recycling Corp., the town of Bethlehem in Albany County, runs the only Capital Region program for households. No information on the program was immediately available from the town recycling office on Elm Avenue, which can be reached at 439-4955, Ext. 1598. The next closest voluntary programs for households were in Hancock and West Stockbridge, Mass. Information is available at <http://www.thermostat-recycle.org>.

Read more: <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Advocates-turn-up-heat-4407940.php#ixzz2PUVuNx8Y>

April 4, 2013

Manufacturers' Thermostat Recycling Programs Fall Short



[click to enlarge](#)

A manufacturer-run program for collecting mercury thermostats is failing to keep the heavy metal out of the trash in most states, according to a new report released today by two

environmental groups: the Multi-State Mercury Products Campaign (MMPC) and the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI).

[Turning up the Heat II](#) estimates that, at most, the industry recycling program has captured eight percent of mercury thermostats coming out of service in the past decade. This has resulted in the disposal of over 50 tons of mercury into the environment, which can expose people to the neurotoxin through fish consumption, according to the groups.

Turning up the Heat II used data from the annual report of the [Thermostat Recycling Corporation](#), a voluntary program created by manufacturers, to estimate the thermostat collection rates per capita for each state in 2009 through 2011. Results showed that TRC collected only 5.8 to 8 percent of the mercury thermostats coming out of service from 2002 to 2011.

In addition, of the 10 states with laws requiring mercury thermostat collection, only two—Maine and Vermont—had programs that were significantly more effective than states with no program at all. The Maine and Vermont programs require that manufacturers pay \$5 to contractors and homeowners who return mercury-added thermostats, resulting in significantly higher collection rates. After Vermont’s \$5 incentive went into effect, the state rose to first in the nation for collection 2011.

“It’s clear that a financial incentive, coupled with good education and outreach, has resulted in Vermont having one of the highest per-capita thermostat collection rates in the country,” said Michael Bender, director of the Mercury Policy Project.

Connecticut is the latest state to pass a law pertaining to mercury thermostat collection. Passed on April 1, the law requires all mercury thermostats removed from service in Connecticut by HVAC contractors and technicians be recycled.

The law also requires all HVAC wholesale distributors with facilities in the state to act as a free collection point for waste mercury thermostats.

The Connecticut collection program is supported by 31 manufacturers participating in Thermostat Recycling Corporation and requires all manufacturers of mercury thermostats sold in the state to either individually or collectively participate in a program.

In January, [more than 140 countries adopted](#) the first legally binding international agreement to control mercury emissions through a number of rules that place limits on power plants and industrial boilers as well as phase out products, such as batteries and thermometers, that use the toxic metal. The treaty, which was adopted in Geneva, establishes controls and sets reduction targets across a range of products, processes and industries where the toxic metal is used, released or emitted, the United Nations said.

<http://www.environmentalleader.com/2013/04/04/manufacturers-thermostat-recycling-programs-fall-short/>

Groups slam bill on mercury woes

By Matt Murphy and Michael Norton

State House News Service / April 1, 2013

Critics of a state Senate-passed bill aimed at increasing the recycling of mercury thermostats plan to press the House to strengthen the legislation and to release a report Wednesday contrasting the proposal with mercury recycling programs in other states.

The report from Clean Water Action and the Product Stewardship Institute will evaluate thermostat collection programs in Massachusetts and nationwide. In an advisory issued on Monday to call attention to the forthcoming report, Clean Water Action described the Senate legislation approved last week as weak.

The environmental groups say millions of mercury thermostats remain in use in the United States and when the products are not recycled, mercury is released into the environment and waterways.

“We don’t think this is the way to get mercury pollution reduced,” said Elizabeth Saunders of Clean Water Action, about the Senate bill. “Based on what we’ve seen in other states, a program like this is not enough to do the job and there are more tools in the tool box needed.”

Maine and Vermont have the most effective programs, she said, with clear recycling goals and accountability measures that have produced strong recycling rates for mercury thermostats and light bulbs. The programs include a \$5 redemption program for homeowners and contractors who return mercury products to manufacturers for recycling.

“We think Massachusetts can do better. Unfortunately, lawmakers have not demonstrated that they want to do what works, and we think that’s unfortunate,” Saunders said.

Senator Marc Pacheco, Democrat of Taunton, said last week that the Senate bill moves the state’s thermostat sellers from a voluntary recycling program to a mandatory program.

He said manufacturers had agreed with the environmental lobby on the bill’s language and that the bill eliminates some industry-side liability.

“This is a good bill,” he said. “It will be good for the environment. It’s good for business.”

The bill released from the Senate Ways and Means Committee last week is almost identical to one that passed the House and Senate last session, but failed to receive the final votes needed in both branches before the end of the session. Senators Jamie Eldridge and Sonia Chang-Diaz objected to its passage for not being strong enough.

The current 2006 law banning the sale of mercury thermostats and establishing a voluntary recycling program for light bulbs includes recycling benchmarks that manufacturers have failed to meet, argues Clean Water Action. Manufacturers are supposed to pay \$1 million a year for municipalities to support local recycling initiatives, but the state has not collected that funding.

Clean Water Action and other environmental groups want the Department of Environmental Protection to be given a stronger oversight role, arguing that current volunteer collection programs have been ineffective.

Saunders said her organization is backing a separate bill filed by Representative Ellen Story, Democrat of Amherst, and Senator Thomas McGee, Democrat of Lynn, that would include DEP oversight and clear, enforceable recycling goals for manufacturers.■

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<http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/2013/04/01/critics-weak-state-senate-mercury-bill-see-changes-house/KtgnSiMi2w5Ngae0wzHCpl/story.html>

Vermont ranks No. 1 in mercury thermostat returns

BurlingtonFreePress.com

MONTPELIER — Since 2008 when Vermont mandated collection of **mercury thermostats** and required their manufacturers to pay \$5 to homeowners and contractors for each device turned in, the state has emerged as a national leader in per capita collection.

“It’s clear that a financial incentive, coupled with good education and outreach, has resulted in Vermont having one of the highest per capita thermostat collection rates in the country,” said Michael Bender, director of the international Mercury Policy Project.

In a newly released ranking, Vermont topped the list of states with a 57 percent per capita collection rate.

Maine, the only other state that requires manufacturers to pay \$5 for old mercury-containing thermostats, ranked right behind Vermont in per capita collection rates.

A report released Wednesday by a coalition of mercury product campaign partners, including Vermont Public Interest Research Group and the Mercury Policy Project, suggests the financial incentive is an important factor in preventing mercury thermostats from being discarded.

"We certainly believe that the cash incentive has had an impact," said Gary Gulka, chief of the assistance and prevention program in the waste management division of the Department of [Environmental](#) Conservation.

The report, “Turning Up the Heat II,” concluded that the industry’s recycling program — voluntary in most states — is failing to prevent tons of mercury from being disposed of

in landfills or incinerators where it can be released into the environment and eventually create a human health hazard.

And while the manufacturers herald percentage increases in collections, the report suggests the voluntary programs collected less than eight percent of the mercury-containing thermostats coming out of service between 2002 and 2011. A thermostat contains about four grams of mercury and the Environmental Protection Agency has estimated more than 2 million are replaced each year.

In 2010, the biggest thermostat manufacturers discontinued making thermostats containing mercury, but Bender with the Mercury Policy Project noted that many homeowners have functioning mercury thermostats that can last 20 years or longer. It will take years to replace them.

The manufacturers who formerly produced most of the mercury thermostats set up a Thermostat Recycling Corporation in 1998, which runs a voluntary take-back program.

Collections jumped in Maine and Vermont after policy-makers piggy-backed disposal bans and incentive payments on the manufacturers' take-back program.

Vermont's incentive collection began in April of 2009 and that year 1,890 thermostats were returned. In each the following two years, the number collected exceeded 3,300. Preliminary numbers for 2012 suggest about 3,200 were collected, Gulka in the waste management division said.

"Every year there are fewer of these out there," he noted, offering one possible explanation for the slight drop.

While the new report stresses how few thermostats are being collected compared to the number likely replaced and discarded, Gulka said it was impossible to estimate how many are coming out of service in Vermont, but not being collected.

"I can't tell you if it is 20, 50 or 80 percent being collected," Gulka said. "I tend to think it is significantly higher than the national average," he continued, adding, "We are trying our hardest to direct as many as we can to recycling."

There are collection sites throughout Vermont at 53 plumbing and heating wholesalers, 74 [hardware](#) stores and 19 municipal solid waste district locations.

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/article/20130403/NEWS03/304030016/Vermont-ranks-No-1-mercury-thermostat-returns?odyssey=mod%7Cnewswell%7Ctext%7CFRONTPAGE%7Cs>

Vt. tops nation in removing mercury thermostats

April 07,2013

AP,MONTPELIER — A new report by a group working to get mercury out of the environment says Vermont leads the nation in efforts to collect mercury thermostats and keep them out of the waste stream.

The Mercury Policy Project and Vermont Public Interest Research Group joined in releasing figures showing that Vermont and Maine are the nation's leaders because they require manufacturers to pay \$5 to contractors and homeowners who return mercury-added thermostats, resulting in significantly higher collection rates.

“It's clear that a financial incentive, coupled with good education and outreach, has resulted in Vermont having one of the highest per-capita thermostat collection rates in the country,” said Michael Bender, director of the international Mercury Policy Project.

Vermont's mercury thermostat bounty program started in 2009, with 53 participating plumbing and heating wholesalers, 74 hardware stores, and 19 municipal waste-collection locations.

Collections jumped after Vermont's bounty went into effect, and the state rose to first in the nation for collection in 2011.

In the first year of the program, 1,890 thermostats were turned in, the Burlington Free Press reported. In the following two years, more than 3,300 were collected.

Preliminary numbers suggest about 3,200 were collected in 2012, said Gary Gulka of the state's Department of Environmental Conservation.

“We certainly believe that the cash incentive has had an impact,” Gulka said.

The biggest thermostat manufacturers discontinued making thermostats containing mercury in 2010. Many homeowners still have functioning mercury thermostats that can last 20 years or longer, Bender said.

<http://www.timesargus.com/article/20130407/THISJUSTIN/704079925>

Read more: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Report-Vt-top-for-collecting-thermostats-4414471.php#ixzz2PjW2wZ40>

Politics on the Hudson

Environmental activists want mercury thermostats recycled

03 April 2013 by [Jessica Bakeman](#) in [Uncategorized](#) - [No Comments](#)

NYPIRG and environmental advocates on Wednesday pushed for legislation that would require mercury thermostats to be recycled to decrease individuals' risk of mercury poisoning, Gannett's Haley Viccaro reports.



A report released by national environmental groups this month said that New York ranks 37th in the nation for thermostat recycling. The recycling programs in the state are manufacturer-run, and advocates said that companies are failing to keep toxic heavy metals under control.

“New York’s mercury thermostat collection program is at the bottom of the toxic barrel,” said Laura Haight, senior environmental associate for NYPIRG, in a statement. “While other states have made progress on this issue, New York has slipped from bad to worse.”

In 2010, Assemblyman Bob Sweeney introduced legislation that required mandatory collection programs statewide, which has passed every year. Last year, Sen. Mark Grisanti, R-Buffalo, also proposed a bill that the Senate passed in June.

“Mercury is a toxic substance,” Grisanti said in a statement. “We need an effective collection program to keep our water and air clean and free from mercury contamination.”

Groups gathered at the Capitol for a news conference Wednesday, urging the state Legislature to support a mandatory collection law and financial incentives for the collection of mercury thermostats. They are pushing for the governor and lawmakers to pass the legislation this year.

The state collects about 8 percent of mercury thermostats, which resulted in more than 50 tons of mercury being exposed in the environment and water, the report said. About 310,000 thermostats are taken out of service annually, 1 percent of them collected and recycled.

“New York State has not done nearly enough to keep mercury from being released into our environment, and as a result we are falling behind other states,” said Saima Anjam, of Environmental Advocates of New York, in a statement. “New York should be a leader.”

<http://polhudson.lohudblogs.com/2013/04/03/environmental-activists-want-mercury-thermostats-recycled/>

Report: Mercury-Recycling Program Working

04/03/2013 01:06 PM ET

A report from the Natural Resources Council of Maine indicates that the state's program to encourage recycling of mercury-laden thermostats is working.

A new report out today hails Maine's program to encourage the proper recycling of mercury-containing thermostats. Under the program, Mainers who turn thermostats in to recycling centers in designated stores get a \$5 rebate.

Abby King, the toxics policy advocate for the Natural Resources Council of Maine, says those rebates are making a difference.

"What this report shows is that when people have a financial incentive to do the right thing and recycle their toxic products, that has an effect on how many people choose to do that and protect the environment," King says.

King says Maine collects more thermostats per capita than all but one of the other states with a program, and significantly more than states with no program.

King says the biggest problem with the program is that not enough Mainers know about it. Though Maine is doing better than most other states in collecting defunct mercury-laden thermostats, NRCM officials estimate that only about a quarter of thermostats that are discarded in Maine each year are recycled.

King says the makers of mercury thermostats need to "step up" and do a better job at advertising the program.

This story was reported by Irwin Gratz.

<http://www.mpbn.net/Home/tabid/36/ctl/ViewItem/mid/5347/ItemId/27210/Default.aspx>

Waste News
April 3, 2013
Jennifer Kalish

Manufacturer-run programs for recycling mercury thermostats may be failing to keep the neurotoxin out of landfills in most states, according to a [report](#) released April 2 by the [Mercury Policy Project](#), an environmental interest group.

Of the 10 states with laws requiring mercury thermostat collection, only two – Maine and Vermont – had programs more effective than in states with no program at all, according to the report.

The successful recycling rates in Maine and Vermont are likely due to financial incentive programs offered by manufacturers to homeowners and businesses to encourage recycling of mercury thermostats, according to the report.

The U.S. EPA estimates that 2 to 3 million mercury thermostats come out of service each year nationally, amounting to 7 to 10 tons of mercury annually.

Manufacturer-run recycling programs in the U.S. have apparently only been able to divert 8% of mercury thermostats coming out of service from landfills in the past decade, the report said.

[Connecticut](#) is the latest state to enact a mandatory recycling program for mercury thermostats.

<http://wasterecyclingnews.com/article/20130403/NEWS03/130409967/study-finds-mercury-thermostat-recycling-in-most-states-to-be>

Vermont leads U.S. in collecting discarded mercury thermostats

#Montpelier — While a manufacturer-run program for collecting mercury thermostats is failing to keep the toxic heavy metal out of the trash—and the environment—in most states, Vermont leads the nation in per capita collection rates, according to a new report released April 3 by the Mercury Policy Project and VPIRG.

#The report estimates that, at most, the industry recycling program has captured 8% of mercury thermostats coming out of service nationally in the past decade. This has resulted in the disposal of over 50 tons of mercury into the environment, which can expose people to the neurotoxin through fish consumption.

#Of the 10 states with laws requiring mercury thermostat collection, only two—Maine and Vermont—had programs that were significantly more effective than states with no program at all. The Maine and Vermont programs require that manufacturers pay \$5 to contractors and homeowners who return mercury-added thermostats, resulting in significantly higher collection rates.

#Vermont's mercury thermostat bounty program commenced on April 1, 2009, with 53 participating plumbing and heating wholesalers, 74 hardware stores, and 19 municipal solid waste district collection locations. After Vermont's bounty went into effect, collections skyrocketed, and the state rose to first in the nation for collection in 2011.

#"It's clear that a financial incentive, coupled with good education and outreach, has resulted in Vermont having one of the highest per capita thermostat collection rates in the country," said Michael Bender, director of the Mercury Policy Project. "A lot of credit for this goes to DEC staff outreach efforts."

<http://www.addison-eagle.com/news/2013/apr/03/vermont-leads-us-collecting-discarded-mercury-ther/>

Report: VT Leads Country in Collecting Discarded Mercury Thermostats

Posted: Apr 03, 2013 12:38 PM EDT Updated: Apr 03, 2013 12:38 PM EDT
By Joe Gullo - [email](#)

MONTPELIER, Vt. -

A new report released by the Mercury Policy Project and VPIRG showed Vermont leading the nation in collecting discarded mercury thermostats.

A press release says the recycling program has captured 8% of mercury thermostats being discarded in the past decade.

The Vermont program requires manufacturers to pay \$5 to contractors and homeowners who return mercury-added thermostats. A press release says this has resulted in higher collection rates.

"It's clear that a financial incentive, coupled with good education and outreach, has resulted in Vermont having one of the highest per capita thermostat collection rates in the country," said Michael Bender, director of the Mercury Policy Project. "A lot of credit for this goes to DEC staff outreach efforts."

Vermont's mercury thermostat bounty program started on April 1, 2009. A press release says 53 participating plumbing and heating wholesalers, 74 hardware stores, and 19 municipal solid waste district collection locations have collected thermostats.

[Read the full report here.](#)

<http://www.fox44abc22yourvoice.com/story/21867180/report-vt-leads-country-in-collecting-discarded-mercury-thermostats>

Mercury Thermostat Collection Programs Failing in Texas, U.S.

Public News Service - TX |

April 5, 2013

AUSTIN, Texas – Voluntary efforts to keep mercury thermostats out of the trash in Texas and nationwide are failing, according to a new [analysis](#) called Turning Up The Heat. Michael Bender, director of the Mercury Policy Project, says the programs run by manufacturers have captured only a small portion of the thermostats that have come out of service over the past decade. "We estimate that nationally that only about 8 percent of the available mercury thermostats are being collected," he says, "and as a result of that about 50 tons of mercury got into the environment that could've been collected." Mercury and most its compounds are extremely toxic, and exposure can lead to a variety of physical, cognitive, and behavioral problems. While there has been a four-fold increase in the rate of mercury thermostats turned-in in Texas, Bender says the actual numbers are small. "What they don't mention," he says, "is the Texas program collected less than 5,000 thermostats in total for 2011 compared to, for instance, the state of Maine, where they collected over 6,000 thermostats in the same year with a population 20 times smaller." To improve the rate, Bender says there should be a ban on discarding mercury thermostats in the trash. In addition, he says incentives have been shown to work in some states, such as offering \$5 for each one that's turned in. "It's mainly directed at heating and ventilation and air conditioning contractors, and what we're trying to do is convince them that it's worth a little extra time to bring those in." The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 2 to 3 million thermostats come out of service annually. Each contains an average of 4 grams of mercury. bit.ly/ZeUc8I

John Michaelson, Public News Service - TX

<http://www.publicnewsservice.org/index.php?/content/article/31773-1>

MASSACHUSETTS: Enviros call for stronger oversight in mercury recycling bill *(Wednesday, April 3, 2013)*

Opponents of a Massachusetts Senate bill meant to increase the recycling of mercury thermostats are set to pressure the House for stricter legislation and urge it to release a report today contrasting the proposal to similar ones in other states.

The report comes from Clean Water Action and the Product Stewardship Institute, which last week described the Senate proposal as weak.

Environmental groups say millions of mercury thermostats are still used in the United States, and when the products are not recycled, mercury escapes into the environment and waterways.

Maine and Vermont have implemented the most effective programs, said Elizabeth Saunders of Clean Water Action. Those bills include clear recycling goals, incentives and accountability provisions that have led to strong recycling rates for mercury thermostats and light bulbs, she said.

State Sen. Marc Pacheco (D) said last week that the Senate bill transitions Massachusetts' thermostat sellers from a voluntary recycling program to a mandatory one.

But environmental advocates want the bill to give the Department of Environmental Protection a stronger oversight role (Murphy/Norton, *Boston Globe*, April 2). – KJ

Mercury thermostat collection programs failing in Utah, U.S.

Stephen Cummings

Thermostat

The new report "Turning Up the Heat II" says the thermostat industry's voluntary recycling program has captured only 8% of the mercury thermostats that have come out of service in the past decade.

Posted: Monday, April 8, 2013 5:30 am

Chris Thomas / Utah News Connection | [0 comments](#)

SALT LAKE CITY - Voluntary efforts to keep mercury thermostats out of the trash in Utah and nationwide are failing, according to a [new analysis](#), "Turning Up the Heat II." Michael Bender, director of the Mercury Policy Project, said the programs run by manufacturers have captured only a small portion of the thermostats that have come out of service over the past decade.

The report says the manufacturers' group has made the figures sound more impressive by reporting them as year-over-year increases, instead of actual numbers of thermostats collected.

"We estimate that, nationally, only about 8 percent of the available mercury thermostats are being collected," said Bender. "As a result of that, about 50 tons of mercury got into the environment that could have been collected."

The report notes that Utah rounded up more than 800 old thermostats in 2009, but only half that many in the next two years combined. That ranks Utah 42nd among the states for its collection efforts.

Mercury and most of its compounds are extremely toxic, and exposure to them can lead to a variety of physical, cognitive and behavioral problems.

To improve the turn-in rate, Bender urged a ban on tossing mercury thermostats into the trash. In addition, he said, incentives have been shown to work in some states, such as offering \$5 for each one that is turned in.

"It's mainly directed at heating and ventilation and air conditioning contractors," he said. "What we're trying to do is convince them it's worth a little extra time to bring those in."

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 2 million to 3 million thermostats come out of service annually. Each contains an average of 4 grams of mercury.

The "Turning Up the Heat" report is available at mercurypolicy.org/.

http://www.cachevalleydaily.com/news/article_ae71b2fc-a00b-11e2-9788-001a4bcf6878.html

Report: Vermont top state for collecting old mercury thermostats

Monday April 8, 2013

MONTPELIER (AP) -- A new report by a group working to get mercury out of the environment says Vermont leads the nation in efforts to collect mercury thermostats and keep them out of the waste stream.

The Mercury Policy Project and Vermont Public Interest Research Group joined this week in releasing figures showing that Vermont and Maine are the nation's leaders because they require manufacturers to pay \$5 to contractors and homeowners who return mercury-added thermostats, resulting in significantly higher collection rates.

"It's clear that a financial incentive, coupled with good education and outreach, has resulted in Vermont having one of the highest per capita thermostat collection rates in the country," said Michael Bender, director of the international Mercury Policy Project.

Vermont's mercury thermostat bounty program commenced in 2009, with 53 participating plumbing and heating wholesalers, 74 hardware stores, and 19 municipal solid waste district collection locations.

Collections jumped after Vermont's bounty went into effect, and the state rose to first in the nation for collection in 2011.

In the first year of the program, 1,890 thermostats were turned in, the Burlington Free Press (<http://bfpne.ws/13VqNIN>) reported. In the following two years, more than 3,300 were collected. Preliminary numbers suggest about 3,200 were collected in 2012, said Gary Gulka of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

"We certainly believe that the cash incentive has had an impact," Gulka said.

The biggest thermostat manufacturers discontinued making thermostats containing mercury in 2010. Many homeowners still have functioning mercury thermostats that can last 20 years or longer, Bender noted.

http://www.benningtonbanner.com/news/ci_22975867/report-vermont-top-state-collecting-old-mercury-thermostats

Vt. tops nation in removing mercury thermostats

April 07,2013

AP,MONTPELIER — A new report by a group working to get mercury out of the environment says Vermont leads the nation in efforts to collect mercury thermostats and keep them out of the waste stream.

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The biggest thermostat manufacturers discontinued making thermostats containing mercury in 2010. Many homeowners still have functioning mercury thermostats that can last 20 years or longer, Bender said.

<http://www.timesargus.com/article/20130407/THISJUSTIN/704079925>

Read more: <http://rutlandherald.com/article/20130407/THISJUSTIN/704079937>

<http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Report-Vt-top-for-collecting-thermostats-4414471.php#ixzz2PjW2wZ40>

<http://www.telegram.com/article/20130407/NEWS/104079826/1052>

[Mercury collection programs are failing, toxic compounds ending up in trash](#)

By: [KJZZ News](#) on 04/08/2013

A new report says voluntary programs to keep mercury thermostats out of the trash in Arizona, and across the country, are failing.

Michael Bender of the Mercury Policy Project says the programs, run by manufacturers, have captured just a small portion of the thermostats that have come out of service in the last ten years.

“We estimate that nationally only about 8 percent of the available mercury thermostats are being collected, and as a result of that, there’s about 50 tons of mercury that got into the environment that could have been collected,” Bender said.

The report ranks Arizona 31st among the states in its mercury thermostat collection rate. Mercury and most of its compounds are extremely toxic and exposure can lead to a variety of physical, cognitive and behavioral problems.

<http://www.kjzz.org/content/1304/mercury-collection-programs-are-failing-toxic-compounds-ending-trash>

Mercury Thermostat Collection Programs Failing in Arizona, U.S.

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Mercury Thermostat Collection Programs Failing in Arizona, U.S.

April 8, 2013

PHOENIX - Voluntary efforts to keep old mercury thermostats out of the trash in Arizona and nationwide are failing, according to a new [analysis](#). Michael Bender, director of the Mercury Policy Project, said the programs run by manufacturers have captured only a small portion of the thermostats that have come out of service over the past decade.

"We estimate that, nationally, only about 8 percent of the available mercury thermostats are being collected, and, as a result of that, there's about 50 tons of mercury that got into the environment that could've been collected," Bender charged.

The report ranks Arizona 31st among the states in its collection rate for mercury thermostats in the last few years. Mercury and most of its compounds are extremely toxic, and exposure can lead to a variety of physical, cognitive and behavioral problems.

To improve the turn-in rate, Bender said, there should be a ban on tossing mercury thermostats into the trash. In addition, he said, in some state, incentives have been shown to work, such as offering \$5 for each old thermostat that's turned in.

"It's mainly directed at heating and ventilation, air-conditioning contractors, and what we're trying to do is convince them it's worth a little extra time to bring those in," he said.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that two to three million thermostats come out of service annually across the country. Each contains an average of four grams of mercury.

See the "Turning Up the Heat II" report at MercuryPolicy.org.

Doug Ramsey, Public News Service - AZ

<http://www.publicnewsservice.org/index.php?/content/article/31780-1>

Mercury Thermostat Recycling Program Failing - Study

Apr. 9, 2013 [Allan Gerlat](#) | Waste Age

A manufacturer-run mercury [thermostat collection and recycling](#) program is largely failing to keep the toxic material out of the waste stream, according a new study.

The report by the Boston-based [Product Stewardship Institute](#) (PSI) and the Multi-State Mercury Products Campaign (MMPC) states the industry recycling program has in the past decade captured no more than 8 percent of the mercury thermostats at the end of their use, according to a [news release](#).

“Turning up the Heat II” drew data from the annual report of the Thermostat Recycling Corp., (TRC) a voluntary [program created by manufacturers](#), to estimate the thermostat collection rates per capita for each state in 2009 through 2011. Results showed that TRC collected only 5.8 to 8 percent of the mercury thermostats coming out of service from 2002 to 2011. The low recycling rate has resulted in more than 50 tons of mercury waste being disposed into the environment.

"For decades, companies like Honeywell, White-Rodgers and General Electric profited from the sale of mercury thermostats but now are shirking their responsibilities when it comes to preventing pollution," said Michael Bender, director of the Mercury Policy Project. "In state after state, manufacturers have pushed for collection programs that don't work. It's time to disregard their misinformation and do what's right to protect public health."

The U.S. [Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) has estimated that 2 million to 3 million thermostats reach the end of their use each year in the United States, amounting to 7 to 10 tons of mercury annually. Each thermostat contains an average of 4 grams of mercury.

Of the 10 states with laws requiring mercury thermostat collection, only two – Maine and Vermont – had programs that were significantly more effective than states with no program at all. The Maine and Vermont programs require that manufacturers pay \$5 to contractors and homeowners who return mercury-added thermostats, resulting in significantly higher collection rates, the groups said.

<http://waste360.com/thermostats/mercury-thermostat-recycling-program-failing-study>