



Mercury
Policy Project



Mercury
Free
Wisconsin



Madison Environmental
Justice Organization

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NGOs FROM AROUND THE WORLD CALL FOR ACTION IN CONFRONTING GLOBAL MERCURY CRISIS

Concurrent Conference Will Identify Solutions to Mercury Problems

Madison, WI, USA -- An NGO led forum, "Finding Solutions to the Global Mercury Crisis" will be held, August 7th – 10th. Advocates from international environment and health policy organizations will focus on available, effective, common sense solutions that will reduce mercury releases and environmental and public health benefits. This conference will be held simultaneously with a global mercury science meeting, markedly more research oriented.

Early drafts of a "synthesis manuscript" which the science meeting conferees will release on the final day of the meeting suggest that the conference outcome may emphasize uncertainties about mercury rather than recommendations for action or specific solutions to known mercury problems.

"The fact that mercury presents adverse local and global effects warranting immediate action has already been acknowledged by the United Nations and a host of countries," said Michael Bender, Director of the Mercury Policy Project. "By hosting our meeting alongside the science conference, we hope that participants will come away with more concrete solutions to reduce mercury pollution and its impacts."

At their meeting, the NGOs will demonstrate that the mercury crisis is a solvable problem and that use and pollution reduction alternatives are cost effective and available. Co-sponsors of the NGO meeting will relay new evidence on the prevalence of mercury in fish, an American and global diet staple, and the risks of exposure from consumption of those fish.

"To see the presence of mercury in our lives, just go to a grocery store, pick up a swordfish or tuna fillet, and instead of cooking it, send it to a lab for analysis," said Eric Uram of the Mercury Free Wisconsin coalition. "Our groups did that here in Wisconsin and as we expected, the swordfish is loaded with mercury, at levels above the Food & Drug Administration's (FDA) action level. Tuna comes in a little lower, but it's still high enough to warrant limiting consumption, particularly by young women and children."

"These data show how much we need signs at seafood counters to convey the FDA advice and to make sure parents and parents-to-be get the information they need to make informed and healthy choices for their families," said Jackie Savitz of Oceana. "But none of the grocery stores in Wisconsin where we

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got the fish have such signs. Posting the government's advisory on mercury in seafood is another simple, common sense solution to this widespread problem."

High mercury levels in seafood provide clear evidence of the need to take stronger action to address the mercury problem.

"Wisconsin has fallen behind in regulating mercury emissions from power plants," said Keith Reopelle, Program Director for Clean Wisconsin. "We need to reduce mercury emissions by at least 90 percent as our neighbors in Illinois and Minnesota have." The Wisconsin DNR will make a decision on mercury regulations this fall.

"To reduce human mercury exposure, mercury-free solutions also should be promoted in chlor alkali facilities, and further investigated in dentistry and in artisanal and small scale gold mining," said Elena Lymberidi, "Zero Mercury Campaign" Project Coordinator, of the European Environmental Bureau.

Results of the Wisconsin fish testing are available at <http://www.mercurypolicy.org>. Fish was purchased at Sam's Club, Pick and Save, Jewel, Cub Foods and Copps.

Sponsors of the advocacy conference on mercury include:

Mercury Policy Project, <http://www.mercurypolicy.org>
Natural Resources Defense Council, <http://www.nrdc.org>
European Environmental Bureau's Zero Mercury Campaign, <http://www.zeromercury.org/>
Oceana, <http://www.oceana.org/>
Health Care Without Harm, <http://www.mercuryfreehealthcare.org/>
National Wildlife Federation, <http://www.nwf.org/mercury/>
Toxics Link of India, <http://www.toxicslink.org/>
International Academy of Oral Medicine & Toxicology, <http://www.iaomt.org/>
Clean Wisconsin, <http://www.cleanwisconsin.org>
Mercury Free Wisconsin, <http://www.mercuryfreewi.org>
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, <http://www.wiwf.org/>
Physicians for Social Responsibility Wisconsin, <http://www.psrmadison.org/>
Madison Environmental Justice Organization, <http://www.mejo.us>
Sierra Club, <http://www.sierraclub.org/mercury/>
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, <http://www.iatp.org/>
Ban Mercury Working Group, <http://www.ban.org/Ban-Hg-Wg/>
Consumers for Dental Choice, <http://www.toxicteeth.org/>
Green Action of Japan, <http://www.greenaction-japan.org/>

For more information on each of the conferences, see:

<http://www.mercurypolicy.org/new/documents/AgendaWINGOHgMtg061506.pdf>
<http://www.mercury2006.org>

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