

Subcommittee on Environment & Hazardous Materials Approves Mercury Export Ban Act of 2007

The Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials completed a markup this morning on H.R. 1534, "The Mercury Export Ban Act of 2007," legislation aimed at preventing mercury exposure. Subcommittee members approved the proposed bill by voice vote.

NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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Contact: Jodi Seth, 202-225-5735

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Bill prohibits the sale, distribution, and transfer of elemental mercury by Federal agencies

Washington, D.C. — The Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials completed a markup this morning on H.R. 1534, "The Mercury Export Ban Act of 2007," legislation aimed at preventing mercury exposure. Subcommittee members approved the proposed bill by voice vote.

"The approval of this legislation is a critical step in our efforts to address the problem of mercury contamination and exposure and better protect the public health," said Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Mercury is a potent neurotoxin with long-term health risks, especially for children and developing fetuses. The most significant source of mercury exposure to people in the United States is ingestion of mercury-contaminated fish. A recent report from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on U.S. fish advisories shows that 48 States have issued advisories, covering more than 14 million lake acres and almost 890,000 river miles.

H.R. 1534 would amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to prohibit the sale, distribution, and transfer of elemental mercury by Federal agencies. Additionally, it would reduce the global supply and demand of mercury with the prohibition of elemental mercury exports by 2010.

"Passing this legislation is essential to the health of local, regional, and global populations because mercury is a transboundary pollutant, it knows no borders," said Rep. Albert Wynn (D-MD), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials, "Mercury can travel long distances and deposit in land and water, affecting our drinking water and the food we eat."

The approved legislation also would help address the issue of long-range mercury transport by preventing the export of elemental mercury into the global marketplace and requiring that the Department of Energy and the Department of Defense keep mercury stockpiles in storage.

The legislation will now be referred to the full membership of the Energy and Commerce Committee for consideration. Please visit <http://energycommerce.house.gov> for more information.

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515

