



SIERRA CLUB
CALIFORNIA

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SIERRA CLUB HAILS THERMOSTAT RECYCLING LAW AS A MODEL

(Palo Alto) – Sierra Club California today praised a new California law requiring the manufacturers of mercury-containing thermostats to take responsibility for their safe recycling. The Mercury Thermostat Collection Act of 2008 (Assembly Bill 2347), authored by Assemblymember Ira Ruskin, will take effect next year on July 1. The sponsors of the legislation, Sierra Club California and the California Product Stewardship Council, appeared with Ruskin today in Palo Alto to discuss its enactment.

Statement of Bill Magavern, Director of Sierra Club California

“Passage of The Mercury Thermostat Collection Act will help consumers, governments and our environment. Since mercury is a potent neurotoxin, and many old thermostats contain three grams of mercury, we need to keep the waste thermostats out of our landfills. Most California consumers want to do the right thing, but until now they have not had the information or opportunity to recycle mercury thermostats.

Furthermore, this mercury thermostat recycling program, passed with the support of the major manufacturers, can provide a new model for dealing with household hazardous wastes in California. Instead of asking our cash-strapped local governments to shoulder the burden, we should require the companies that made and profited from products to take the responsibility for safely collecting and recycling them. The Legislature and Governor should use this thermostat law as a beginning, and move on to extending producer responsibility to paint, light bulbs and other household hazardous wastes.

Many individuals and organizations contributed to the enactment of this law. Sierra Club California thanks Assemblymember Ruskin for persistently pushing the bill over two years. Our co-sponsor, the local government organization California Product Stewardship Council, was an invaluable partner, and the Department of Toxic Substances Control gave crucial technical assistance throughout the process. The Honeywell Corporation showed a commitment to reaching agreement on difficult issues, and the Retailers Association actively supported the bill. We benefitted from the input of experts and advocates throughout the country convened by the State Environmental Leadership Program. Also, the Product Stewardship Institute facilitated a collaborative dialogue that laid some of the groundwork for this effort.”

