



## Toxic Pollutants Initiative<sup>1</sup> Progress Report – October 2007

### Introduction

The GLRC Strategy calls for continuing the reduction and virtual elimination of persistent toxic substances such as mercury and PCBs in the basin, as well as preventing new toxic threats to the basin through pollution prevention and enhanced surveillance, protecting public health through education and outreach, and working with international forums to address sources outside the basin. This Toxic Pollutants Initiative sets forth a series of near term activities undertaken by members of the Collaboration to implement those recommendations.

### Activities

#### 1. Mercury Phase-down Strategy

A basin-wide Great Lakes mercury product stewardship strategy is under development to fulfill the Strategy recommendation to phase down mercury in products and waste. A workgroup of state, tribal, and city staff was formed in April 2006 to develop the strategy. The goal is to have a final, GLRC-endorsed strategy by late 2007. Outcomes will include legislative and policy responses to the strategy's recommendations and implementation actions that will result in longer-term removal from the basin of mercury in products and waste.

#### Progress to Date

- The draft was reviewed by state, tribal and local government leaders, and approved to release for public comment.
- The *Draft Mercury In Products Phase-Down Strategy* is now available for public comment until October 27, 2007, and can be viewed at:  
<http://www.glrc.us/initiatives/toxics/draftgphasedownstrategy.html>

#### 2. Burn Barrel Education and Outreach Campaign

U.S. EPA with Great Lakes states, tribes, and cities are jointly developing an education and outreach program to address open burning across the Great Lakes basin. This project targets local and tribal waste management officials with:

1. Education about environmental concerns associated with trash burning;
2. Information on infrastructure and alternatives to burning in communities; and
3. Tools to strengthen burning ordinances and support greater compliance with current regulations.

Staff will present this program at meetings in all Great Lakes states through the end of 2007. Basin outcomes will include: number of ordinances banning burning, trash disposal alternatives implemented, and reductions in the practice of burning garbage.

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<sup>1</sup> The Toxic Pollutants Initiative was endorsed by the GLRC Executive Committee on March 2, 2007

### **Progress to Date**

- IL/IN Sea Grant, Great Lakes states, and U.S. EPA staff have presented information to local solid waste management officials and others on open burning at numerous conferences throughout the basin.
- Hundreds of *Learn not to Burn* kits have been distributed. Kits are on-line at <http://www.iisgcp.org/learnnot2burn/>.

### **3. Pharmaceutical and Electronic Waste Disposal Education and Outreach**

U.S. EPA, Great Lakes states, tribes, and cities are developing an education and outreach effort to address pharmaceutical and electronic wastes in the Great Lakes basin. Similar to the burn barrel campaign, this campaign targets waste management officials with information about pharmaceutical and electronic waste disposal and recycling policies and options. IL/IN Sea Grant staff is attending a series of state-wide meetings of local and tribal government officials in the Basin to present and provide toolkits through 2007. Outcomes will include: collection and recycling activities implemented as a result of the campaign; pounds of pharmaceuticals collected and safely disposed; and pounds of E-waste recycled or safely disposed.

### **Progress to Date**

- Toolkits have been developed with information on: health and environmental concerns with these wastes; current regulations on recycling and disposal; examples of take-back programs and success stories; and a list of resources.
- IL/IN Sea Grant, Great Lakes states, and U.S. EPA staff have presented information to local solid waste management officials and others on pharmaceutical at numerous conferences throughout the basin.
- *Disposal of Unwanted Medicines, a Resource for Action in Your Community* kits are on-line at <http://www.iisgcp.org/unwantedmeds/>.
- An E-waste campaign is under development for 2008.

### **4. Great Lakes Sport Fish Consortium Project**

The Great Lakes Sport Fish Consortium, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, and representatives of Great Lakes states and tribes have been funded by U.S. EPA to finalize a basin-wide uniform mercury protocol for sensitive populations. This project is developing fish consumption outreach materials related to mercury. A final draft protocol will be produced by the end of 2007, and basin-wide outreach materials will be produced by the end of 2008. Outcomes will include advisories based on the protocol. This project will consider the needs of subsistence and commercial fishermen.

### **Progress to Date**

- The Consortium has finalized the *Protocol for Mercury-based Fish Consumption Advice: An addendum to the 1993 Protocol for a Uniform Great Lakes Sport Fish Consumption Advisory*. The protocol represents a workgroup consensus. However, workgroup members did not participate as official agency representatives but as knowledgeable and experienced individuals. Tribal and federal representatives participated as observers.
- The protocol was presented to the Environmental Council of the States and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.
- Basin wide outreach materials are currently under development.