



# STATE OF IOWA

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR  
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
CHUCK GIPP, DIRECTOR

## MEMO

**FROM:** Chuck Gipp, Director, Dept. of Natural Resources

**Cc:** Bruce Trautman, Deputy Director, Dept. of Natural Resources  
Bill Ehm, Administrator, Environmental Services Division  
Sharon Tahtinen, Legislative Liaison, Dept. of Natural Resources  
Alex Moon, Chief, Land Quality Bureau

**DATE:** December 17, 2015

**RE:** Report on Mercury Thermostat Recycling

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I am pleased to provide this status report on the implementation of the Mercury Thermostat Recycling Program as required by Iowa Code 455D.16.

The purpose of Iowa code 455D.16 is to stop the sale and installation of mercury-added thermostats and require manufacturers of mercury-added thermostats to collect and recycle as many mercury-added thermostats as reasonably practicable. To ensure success of the program, the legislation directed the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to submit an annual report to the General Assembly regarding the collection and recycling of mercury-added thermostats in the state.

### **Status of the Mercury Thermostat Recycling Program<sup>1</sup>**

The Thermostat Recycling Corporation (TRC) is acting on behalf of 30 manufacturers representing 104 brands. TRC has 96 collection locations in Iowa, 28 of those are Regional Collection Centers for household hazardous waste, 59 are wholesalers or distributors and seven are contractors. There is also one demolition company and one retailer participating in the program. The program collected 3,071 mercury thermostats containing 24.51 pounds of mercury in 2014 and has collected 150.2 pounds of mercury since the beginning of the legislated program.

### **Actual Collection Rates**

The collection rate is the number of thermostats collected, divided by the number available for collection, expressed as a percentage. Although the number of thermostats collected is available from the TRC report, the number of mercury containing thermostats available for recycling is not as easily obtainable. To determine this, one needs to know the number of thermostats removed each year and what

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<sup>1</sup> This data is based on reports submitted by thermostat manufacturers for the calendar year 2014. Reports for 2015 are due to the DNR April 1, 2016.

percentage of those contain mercury. The DNR has been unable to reach an agreement with industry representatives on what the collection goals should be.

### **Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Thermostat Recycling Program**

Although 2009 was the first year of the legislated program, TRC has been collecting mercury thermostats in Iowa since 1998. Figure 1 shows the number of thermostats collected by TRC each year. In 2014 the number of thermostats collected decreased 5% from the previous year.

**Figure 1:**  
**Number of mercury-added thermostats collected in Iowa by year.**

