

## **Recovery effort nets 34 kilos toxic material**

**Edmonton Journal**

**Sunday, January 16, 2005**

---

Sixty Alberta auto recyclers voluntarily collected and safely disposed of more than 34 kilograms of highly toxic mercury from abandoned vehicles.

The companies rounded up 40,298 lighting switches, each containing 0.7 to one gram of mercury. Cars contain up to two of the switches to power lighting.

A single gram of mercury can pollute an eight-hectare lake so that fish caught there aren't safe to eat for an entire year. Mercury can cause brain damage, birth defects, kidney failure, respiratory harm and liver damage.

The collection effort took place last summer as part of the Clean Air Foundation's Switch Out program.

With support from Alberta Environment, Alberta's auto recyclers collected nearly twice the amount gathered in British Columbia and Ontario combined.

European and Asian automakers discontinued the use of mercury switches in 1996, but North American manufacturers didn't do so until 2003.