



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ONTARIO AUTO RECYCLERS TO CASH IN ON MERCURY

TORONTO, ON – NOV 6, 2003 – The Mercury Recovery in partnership with the Clean Air Foundation today announced the launch of the “Loonie for Loons” campaign to encourage mercury recovery in Ontario. For a limited time, recyclers participating in the Clean Air Foundation’s Switch Out program will receive up to \$1 for every mercury switch that they collect from now until December 5, 2003.

Switch Out is Canada’s first program dedicated to the recovery of mercury from vehicles. Since its launch in 2001, the program has collected over 30,000 mercury switches from the convenience lighting under the hoods and trunks of retired vehicles. To date, participation by recyclers has been voluntary. The “Loonie for Loons” campaign will test the effect of a financial incentive on participation rates.

“Switch Out’s success to date is encouraging and I look forward to greater reductions in mercury releases to our environment as a result of this incentive,” said Leona Dombrowsy, Minister of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment.

Under hood and trunk lighting switches in automobiles are the fourth largest source of mercury pollution in Canada. A single car can have several switches, each containing about one gram of mercury. Without the Switch Out program, approximately 700 kg of mercury would be emitted into the Canadian environment every year as vehicles reach their end of life and are recycled. Switches collected through the program mean direct reductions in mercury emissions to the environment. One gram of mercury can potentially contaminate an 8 hectare lake to levels that leave fish unsafe for consumption.

“Auto Recyclers will finally be rewarded for their voluntary efforts to remove mercury from the scrap they send to steel producers,” said Ian Morton, Executive Director of the Clean Air Foundation. “While Switch Out is the most successful program of its kind in North America, current collection rates are as low as 10%. We expect this rate will increase under the Mercury Recovery Fund incentive,” he added.

“Similar mercury recovery programs in other jurisdictions have confirmed the need for a financial incentive to drive switch capture rates,” said Leah Hagreen, Executive Director of the Mercury Recovery Fund. “Through “Loonie for Loons” we will test the effect of a financial incentive on switch collection in Ontario. If successful, we are challenging industry and government to implement the necessary financial and policy mechanisms to ensure this incentive becomes permanent.”

The Mercury Recovery Fund was set up to create and sustain mercury-product collection, to prevent their disposal to the regular waste stream and the mercury from being emitted to the environment. A new organization, the Fund combines research, financing and direct project management to promote and support mercury-product

recovery efforts. The “Loonie for Loons” initiative is supported by Ontario Power Generation and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment

The Clean Air Foundation is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to developing, implementing and managing public engagement programs and strategic initiatives that result in measurable emission reductions. In addition to Energy Wise, it manages four national programs including Car Heaven, a vehicle retirement program, Mow Down Pollution, a national lawnmower exchange program, Keep Cool, a room air conditioner exchange program, and Switch Out, North America’s largest mercury collection program. For more details on the Clean Air Foundation, visit www.cleanairfoundation.org.

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