



# Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice

P.O. Box 2022, Hartford, Connecticut 06145-2022 Phone (860) 548-1133 Fax (860) 548-9197  
[ccej@environmental-justice.org](mailto:ccej@environmental-justice.org) [www.environmental-justice.org](http://www.environmental-justice.org)

**Testimony of  
In support of SB 205  
March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**My name is Joseph Wasserman and I am a community organizer for Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice. I am here in support of SB 205 - AN ACT REQUIRING CERTAIN THERMOSTAT MANUFACTURERS TO PAY INCENTIVES FOR THE RETURN OF MERCURY THERMOSTATS.**

**Studies have shown that exposure to mercury at even low levels causes damage to children and fetuses, yet, mercury thermostats in Connecticut homes contain thousands of pounds of mercury. We only recycle 5% of end of use mercury thermostats The rest ends up either in landfills or incinerators where they are often burned, releasing mercury into the atmosphere.**

**When trash is burned at the Trash to Energy Plant in Hartford, low-income families are exposed to mercury in the air. When the mercury falls into the lakes and streams, fish ingest it, and this has led to multiple warnings for pregnant women and children to avoid eating fish. A single gram of mercury is enough to contaminate all the fish in a 20 acre lake.**

**Manufacturers need to step up and dramatically increase their collection rates of mercury thermostats to ensure recycling in a safe and responsible way that protects Low-income Environmental Justice Communities and the public as a whole. Senate Bill 205 would require manufacturers to finance a collection and recycling program and pay a \$5 incentive for each mercury thermostat returned for proper recycling. Similar laws passed in Maine and Vermont, have increased the recycling of mercury thermostats by a factor of 10.**

**Let's pass SB 205 this year and protect our children now**