



Connecticut Department of  
**ENERGY &  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION**

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Public Hearing – March 16, 2012  
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Daniel Esty

**Raised Senate Bills No. 93- An Act Concerning a Mercury Thermostat Collection and Financial Incentive Program and No. 350 An Act Requiring the Establishment of Manufacturer Mercury Thermostat Collection and Recycling Programs**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised Senate Bills No. 93, AN ACT CONCERNING A MERCURY THERMOSTAT COLLECTION AND FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM and No 350 AN ACT REQUIRING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MANUFACTURER MERCURY THERMOSTAT COLLECTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAMS. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) welcomes the opportunity to offer the following testimony.

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (Department) supports the concept promoted in Raised Senate Bill No. 93, as an effective way to increase the recovery of mercury thermostats and removing toxic mercury from our waste facilities and ultimately our environment. This bill creates a producer responsibility program for the management of discarded mercury thermostats in Connecticut. Under this bill, thermostat manufacturers would take responsibility for managing their product by establishing a financial incentive for contractors and homeowners to return mercury thermostats. Conversely, the Department does not support Raised Senate Bill No. 350 because it does not improve upon the low recycling rates of the current manufacturer run voluntary program.

The Department of Health continues to issue a statewide fresh fish consumption advisory due to unsafe mercury levels. Mercury enters our environment through a variety of means, including devices such as thermostats being disposed of in municipal solid waste. While Connecticut was the first state in the country to prohibit the sale of new mercury thermostats in 2004, thousands of mercury thermostats are still in service. On average, each mercury thermostat contains about four grams of mercury.

The Department recognizes extended producer responsibility programs as an important strategy for managing Connecticut's solid waste going forward. The state's solid waste management plan, last amended December 2006, identifies product stewardship solutions as a means to help reduce the toxicity of our solid waste. Product stewardship programs acknowledge that consumers, government and manufacturers all play an important role in managing products at the end of their useful life. This

helps relieve the financial burden that currently falls upon municipal government which is tasked with managing household hazardous and solid waste.

Effective product stewardship programs limit the role of government. Raised Senate Bill No. 93, as proposed, requires the Department to play a significant role in the proposed product stewardship program. The Department is not in a position to expand our obligations without additional resources. We ask the legislature to be mindful that this bill not impose additional unfunded responsibilities on the Department. We are willing to work with the committee and stakeholders to address concerns associated with the proposed language.

In summary, the Department supports Raised Senate Bill No. 93 as an effective way to increase the recovery of mercury thermostats. The Department is willing to work with stakeholders, including industry, to plan the implementation of this program to ensure that it is run efficiently and with a limited government role.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact the Department's legislative liaison, Robert LaFrance, at (860) 424-3401 or [Robert.LaFrance@CT.gov](mailto:Robert.LaFrance@CT.gov).