

Kansas Wildlife Federation

2006 Resolution

Mercury Resolution

WHEREAS, mercury is a persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic heavy metal element; and

WHEREAS, mercury exists naturally in the environment but is amplified by unnatural anthropogenic emissions into the air, land, and water during fossil fuel combustion, waste incineration, chlor-alkali production, petroleum refining, mining, and other industrial processes, as well as during the production, use, and disposal of various products; and

WHEREAS, mercury air pollution deposits into lakes, streams, and the oceans where it is transformed into toxic methylmercury and bioaccumulates in fish and fish-eating wildlife; and

WHEREAS, local releases of mercury can be a significant source of deposition to nearby lakes, streams, estuaries, rivers, and forests; and

WHEREAS, mercury air pollution has the ability to both deposit locally and regionally, crossing state and national boundaries and becoming a shared global burden; and

WHEREAS, due to mercury contamination, there are now fish consumption advisories for 2 water bodies in Kansas (the Little Arkansas River from the Main Street bridge immediately west of Valley Center to the confluence with the Arkansas River in Wichita (Sedgwick County)); and the mainstem of the Blue River from U.S. 69 to the Kansas-Missouri state line (Johnson County)); and

WHEREAS, the National Academy of Sciences confirmed that consumption of mercury-contaminated fish by pregnant women and children under 12 causes risk of mercury related health problems including serious neurodevelopmental harm to the fetus, such as attention deficit, decreases in motor function, and delays in fine and gross motor skill development; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that each year more than 630,000 newborns may be exposed to unsafe levels of mercury in utero due to maternal fish consumption; and

WHEREAS, in wildlife, mercury is a reproductive hazard with harmful effects on species such as mallard ducks, loons, terns, alligators, panthers, otters, and mink; and

WHEREAS, fishing is a \$ 391 million dollar industry and Kansas takes pride in the fishing opportunities throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, health and environmental effects of mercury contamination can impose significant adverse costs in the form of increased medical care, special educational and occupational needs, reduced economic performance, and disruptions in recreational and commercial fishing and hunting, and can create disproportionate health, social, and economic impacts among people dependent on subsistence fishing; and

WHEREAS, releases of elemental mercury due to spills and product breakage pose serious health threats, especially to children, and require extensive and expensive cleanups; and

WHEREAS, the mercury contamination threatens the health of Kansas's citizens, wildlife, and economy; and

WHEREAS, effective and affordable mercury pollution control and reduction technologies and techniques have been demonstrated and are commercially available on an industrial scale for major sources of mercury emissions; and

WHEREAS, cost and quality equivalent mercury free products are available for many traditional uses, such as thermostats and batteries.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Kansas Wildlife Federation assembled during its annual meeting February 11, 2006 in Manhattan, Kansas, urges the Governor of Kansas, the Kansas Legislature, and the Kansas Congressional Delegation to:

1. Support the reduction of mercury releases to the environment from all sources; and
2. Require the application of the best available technologies and strategies to control releases from industrial sources, including minimizing releases from coal-fired power plants and replacing obsolete mercury products and processes, including the mercury cell chlor-alkali process; and
3. Support the elimination of elemental mercury in products where there are readily available alternatives or where the use of mercury is not essential; and
4. Support the reduction and proper disposal of mercury in products such as switches, fluorescent lighting, electronic waste, and dental amalgams.

Kansas Wildlife Federation

2006 Resolution

Sale of Public Land in Kansas

WHEREAS, the Kansas Water Office, the Kansas Department of Commerce and other agencies have begun studies pursuant to the sale of public lakefront and river property in Kansas to private individuals; and

WHEREAS, a relatively small amount of public land is available to the citizens of Kansas for recreational purposes; and

WHEREAS, such privatization of this limited resource will lead to the degradation and loss of the aesthetic, hunting, fishing, and recreational values of the property; and

WHEREAS, such development could result in habitat fragmentation, habitat loss and pollution of the existing ecosystem.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Kansas Wildlife Federation assembled during its annual meeting February 11, 2006 in Manhattan, Kansas, opposes all legislation or policy which permits the sale of public lake, reservoir and river property for private development.