



NEWS RELEASE

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SUBJECT:

New Green Tier Charter Encourages Mercury Reduction Efforts by Municipalities

MADISON – Municipalities are the newest group to sign a Green Tier charter with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Green Tier is Wisconsin's innovative program for organizations that voluntarily pledge to go beyond regulatory environmental compliance.

DNR Secretary Matt Frank and Municipal Environmental Group (MEG) - Wastewater president Wally Thom, along with representatives from the first six participating municipalities, signed the Mercury Green Tier Charter for Environmental Performance today at the annual Government Affairs Seminar in Madison.

“We're excited these communities will be leading the way to a safer environment. They've pledged to work to take mercury out of the environment by focusing on mercury reduction earlier than regulations would require”, said DNR Secretary Matt Frank. “What better way to serve your residents than to help ensure the health of our lakes and streams.”

The cities of Marshfield, Rice Lake, Sparta, and Superior and the villages of Jackson and Plover are the first municipalities to sign the Mercury Green Tier Charter for Environmental Performance. Additional communities may join within the next four months by contacting MEG or DNR.

The Green Tier Charter is a partnership effort between DNR and MEG – Wastewater, an association of over 90 communities throughout the state of Wisconsin who own and operate wastewater facilities. The charter will assist mid-sized Wisconsin municipalities in reducing the amount of mercury discharged to their wastewater treatment plants. Typical reduction activities focus on decreasing usage and increasing recycling of mercury-containing products by regular consumers such as schools, hospitals, dentists, and certain industries. Mercury reduction work

done now by the municipalities will be recognized by DNR as meeting future mercury reduction obligations, if applicable.

“We are excited to be involved in one of the first Green Tier charters for municipalities. This charter should help us achieve increased reductions of mercury in a more cost effective manner through cooperative efforts with the DNR”, said Paul Kent of Anderson & Kent S.C., on behalf of MEG. “We hope that additional communities will sign on to this initiative and that this might serve as a model for additional Green Tier opportunities for municipalities in the future”.

In addition to this Charter, DNR is addressing mercury through air emission rules for coal burning utilities, mercury product legislation and work with specific mercury sources.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Charter and the opportunities available to Green Tier participants should contact MEG or visit DNR’s Green Tier web page at <http://greentier.wi.gov>.

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