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### New York Passes Mercury Thermostat Collection Bill

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New York's state legislature has passed a bill for the collection, recycling and/or environmentally safe disposal of mercury thermostats.

The Mercury Thermostat Collection Act calls for manufacturers to develop and implement a thermostat collection program that meets the goal of collecting 15,500 thermostats by 2015, according to a news release from the Boston-based Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) Inc.

The bill, Senate 1676A and Assembly 8084, also calls for the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) to establish annual collection goals afterward, and to make changes to the program if manufacturers fail to meet those goals. Changes could include requiring manufacturers to pay financial incentives to recyclers to encourage greater participation.

The bill now awaits Gov. Andrew Cuomo's signature for it to become law.

The Thermostat Recycling Corp., the non-profit, manufacturer-led collection and disposal organization for mercury thermostats, collects only 1 percent of the estimated 310,000 mercury thermostats taken out of use in New York annually. As a result, more than one ton of mercury enters the state's waste stream each year, the PSI said.

The bill also requires that manufacturers develop and execute an outreach and education program for wholesalers, retailers, contractors and homeowners. Contractors who replace mercury thermostats from a building, or demolish a building that contains mercury thermostats, must deliver the thermostats to a collection site.

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