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State and Local Governments Form Interstate Chemicals Clearinghouse to Promote Toxics Reduction

BOSTON - Environmental officials from 10 state and local governments announced today that they have formed an umbrella organization - the Interstate Chemicals Clearinghouse (IC2) - to promote a clean environment, healthy communities, and a vital economy through the development and use of safer chemicals and products. The goals of the IC2 are to:

- Avoid duplication and enhance efficiency and effectiveness of state, local, and tribal initiatives on chemicals through collaboration and coordination
- Build agency capacity to identify and promote safer chemicals and products
- Ensure that state, local, and tribal agencies, businesses, and the public have ready access to high quality and authoritative chemicals data, information, and assessment methods

Launched under the auspices of the Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association (NEWMOA), the new Clearinghouse:

- Supports state, local, and tribal health and environmental agencies with development and implementation of programs to promote use of safer chemicals and products
- Supports the development of alternative assessment methods and identification of safer alternatives
- Shares data and information on chemical use, hazard, exposure, and alternatives
- Shares strategies and outcomes on chemicals prioritization initiatives
- Builds the capacity of agencies by sharing materials, strategies, and trainings
- Assists agencies in meeting the relevant information needs of businesses, consumers, and the public

The current IC2 Members have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) supporting the principles of the IC2 and formed a Board of Directors to oversee the Clearinghouse's activities. They are inviting additional governmental entities, businesses, non-governmental organizations, academic researchers, consultants, and others to join them in the partnership.

According to Director Ted Sturdevant of the Washington Department of Ecology, "for several years many state and local environmental agencies have been working aggressively to reduce toxic chemicals in consumer products as part of a larger effort to reduce toxics in the environment and protect human health. In the absence of an effective national system for securing and sharing data on toxic chemicals, states are working together to share information and make the most of limited resources."

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's Director Dick Pedersen notes that reducing toxic chemicals in the environment is a top priority for environmental organizations nationwide. "IC2 allows us to leverage state and local resources to be more efficient, effective, and strategic in reducing toxic chemicals regionally and nationally," said Pedersen. "This interstate work is also inter-agency work here in Oregon, and a key opportunity to work together to protect Oregonians from potential harm from chemical exposures," added Gail Shibley, Administrator, Oregon Health Authority, Office of Environmental Public Health.

Members of IC2 as of January 26, 2011:

- California Environmental Protection Agency
- Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
- New York Department of Environmental Conservation
- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality & Oregon Health Authority
- METRO Regional Government (Portland, OR)
- Washington Department of Ecology

NEWMOA is a non-profit, non-partisan interstate association made up of environmental agency directors from the hazardous waste, solid waste, waste site cleanup, pollution prevention, and underground storage tank programs in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Its mission is to help states articulate, promote, and implement economically sound regional programs for the enhancement of environmental protection.

Reporters/Editors Note: Additional information about IC2 can be found on the Web at <http://www.newmoa.org/prevention/ic2/>.