

**NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**Jeff Schoepke, (608) 258-3400**

**WMC Issues Statement Regarding Revised DNR Mercury Rule**

The following is a statement from WMC Environmental Policy Director Jeff Schoepke regarding the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource's revised mercury rule.

*“Despite continued concerns about the wisdom and utility of state-only mercury reduction rules advanced by the DNR, WMC is pleased with proposed changes the Natural Resources Board will consider today which clarify how and when the DNR will reconcile state and federal rules. This language reduces regulatory uncertainty, eliminates duplicative administrative requirements, and meets the business community's goal of moving towards a federal solution to a federal problem. These changes provide significant protection to electric ratepayers who will foot the bill for any rules.*

*“Since the Wisconsin DNR began working on state-only mercury rules more than four years ago, WMC, the largest representative of industrial and commercial electric ratepayers in Wisconsin, has challenged the usefulness of such an effort. Upwards of 70 percent of the mercury deposited in Wisconsin lakes comes from beyond our borders. Therefore, rules imposed only in Wisconsin will provide little or no environmental benefit but would impose additional significant costs on Wisconsin ratepayers.”*

The federal government is currently developing a federal strategy to this federal concern. EPA is under court order to promulgate a mercury rule by March 15, 2005. Given that a federal rule is now legally inevitable, the best way to protect ratepayers in the context of a state rule is to reconcile state and federal rules upon federal promulgation. Not only does such a reconciliation prevent duplicative administrative requirements that are paid for by ratepayers, it is required by state law, Wis. Stat. 285.27 (2)a. The language proposed by DNR today will set forth a process that should provide a seamless onramp from state to federal rules.

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