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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Mercury Management Conference Committee Report Accepted by House and Senate

(BOSTON) – The Mercury Management conference committee co-chaired by Rep. Anne Gobi (D-Spencer) and Sen. Stephen Brewer (D-Barre) filed their report of committee on Wednesday. The Senate accepted the report and on Thursday the House did the same. Rep. Gobi, Sen Brewer and their colleagues have been working diligently for months to find a middle ground that benefits all interested parties.

"We are all well aware of the detrimental health and environmental effects of mercury from air and water pollution to exposure from spills and accumulation in fish," said Rep. Gobi. "I was glad to work with Senator Brewer and the other conferees to present a bipartisan report that has the support of the business community and environmental groups who continue to work on the safe disposal of products containing mercury."

"This bill will benefit the environment while also protecting public safety," said Senator Stephen M. Brewer (D-Barre). "As a nature lover, I am pleased that this bill will help to remove toxic, dangerous mercury from the environment."

The final bill encourages the recycling of mercury thermostats and lamps through the requirement of manufacturers to make collection containers available to wholesalers, retailers, contractors and local government entities. Thermostats wholesalers would be prohibited from selling any thermostats unless they act as a collection site.

Mercury lamp manufacturers will be assessed an annual fee of up to \$10,000 with the goal of reaching \$300,000 to fund the recycling program. The Department of Environmental Protection will use these funds for proper recycling and disposal of mercury lamps. DEP has the discretion to raise the fee if at any point in time there are not enough companies to reach the \$300,000 goal.

The bill now awaits enactment by both branches. Formal sessions end July 31st.

