

Chicago, July 16, 2004

Resolution # 4

Presented by: **Richard M. DALEY**, Mayor of Chicago, Illinois

**MERCURY CONTAMINATION FROM POWER PLANTS**

WHEREAS, one of the most significant impairments to the quality of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence waters has been shown to be mercury contamination; and

WHEREAS, it is widely recognized that high levels of mercury contamination found in the Great Lakes are the cause of increasing numbers of health-based fish consumption advisories throughout the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region; and

WHEREAS, mercury contamination is a documented neurotoxin, and ingestion of mercury-contaminated fish tissue has been shown to result in significant health risks, particularly for women of child-bearing age and children; and

WHEREAS, EPA's own recent analysis concluded that 16% of babies born in the United States this year could have mercury blood levels at or above the unsafe levels as a result of pregnant women ingesting fish from mercury-contaminated waters; and

WHEREAS, every major industrial source of mercury pollution has been subject to federal regulation in the United States except for coal-fired power plants, making power plants the largest uncontrolled manmade source of mercury pollution; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, coal-fired power plants now account for 48 tons, or 40%, of mercury emissions each year; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. EPA has recently proposed regulations to require coal-fired power plants to reduce the nationwide level of mercury emissions from power plants by 69%; however, the U.S. EPA's proposal would allow the power plant industry until 2018 to achieve such reductions, and could allow power plants to achieve such reductions through a "cap-and-trade" system whereby individual power plants would choose for themselves whether to overcomply with the regulations and "sell" the excess rights to emit mercury to other power plants, or undercomply with the regulations and "buy" the excess rights to emit mercury from overcompliant plants; and

WHEREAS, while mayors of cities and towns in the Great Lakes region are pleased that U.S. EPA has proposed regulations to reduce mercury pollution from power plants, mayors are concerned that EPA's proposal would not result in measurable reductions to mercury pollution in the Great Lakes until the year 2018 or later; and

WHEREAS, mayors of cities and towns in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region are further concerned that EPA's proposed "cap and trade" system for achieving mercury reductions may not benefit, and could even be detrimental to, the Great Lakes because such a system would not require mercury reductions on a plant-by-plant basis but could instead allow power plants

in the midwest region to simply buy credits from power plants in other regions and use those credits to increase their mercury emissions, thereby increasing mercury contamination in the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence ;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that while the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors commends the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for proposing mercury standards for coal-fired power plants, the International Association has strong concerns about adverse impacts to the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence Seaway, and tributaries thereto that may result from the U.S. EPA's proposed compliance date of 2018 and the proposed "cap and trade" method of compliance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors strongly urges the U.S. EPA to adopt mercury standards for coal-fired power plants that will achieve a 90% reduction of nationwide mercury emissions by 2010 and that will require every individual power plant to reduce current levels of mercury emissions, and the International Association will take actions during the upcoming year to encourage the U.S. EPA to so act.

**CARRIED**