



June 23, 2011

ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN: ILLINOIS REACHES SETTLEMENT WITH GM TO FUND RECYCLING OF MERCURY SWITCHES

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today said Illinois children and the environment are big winners in a settlement announced between 12 states and the bankruptcy trust established to resolve claims against the former General Motors Corp.

The settlement will help ensure the safe disposal of mercury-containing switches from automobiles manufactured by GM before it dissolved following bankruptcy. This settlement augments an earlier commitment by the “new” GM to make a similar payment.

“This step will help provide the funds necessary to retrieve these components from cars before they go out of commission,” said Madigan. “It is an important part of our efforts nationwide to reduce the level of mercury in the environment, which poses a health risk to everyone but especially to children.”

Under the Agreed Order entered in Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York yesterday, June 22, Attorney General Madigan said Illinois would share in \$2,845,000 set aside by “old” GM to a program that will assist the participating states in collecting and recycling mercury-containing switches. The money will be pooled with funds expected from other carmakers to run the mercury switch removal program. So far, nearly 3.5 million switches have been retrieved, representing approximately 7,650 pounds of mercury.

Exposure to this dangerous element can cause serious health effects to children and others, including damage to the central nervous system, kidneys, liver and immune system.

Joining Illinois in the settlement are Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Massachusetts, which lead the effort in reaching the 12-state agreement.

Senior Assistant Attorney General James Morgan is handling the case for Madigan’s Environmental Bureau in Springfield.

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