WHEREAS, The Mercury Reduction Oversight Commission has the mission to prevent
human sources of mercury from contaminating the environment (air, water, soil); and
WHEREAS, The Mercury Reduction and Education Act passed by the General Assembly
in 2001 has declared that mercury is a persistent and toxic pollutant that bioaccumulates in the
environment, and mercury deposition has proven to be a significant problem in the northeastern
United States; and
WHEREAS, The Mercury Reduction and Education Act prohibits the disposal of
mercury-added products by means other than recycling or hazardous waste disposal as of July
2005; and
WHEREAS, Convenience light switches and other auto parts may contain mercury, and
therefore pose a threat to human health and the environment if improperly disposed of at the end
of their useful life; and
WHEREAS, An estimated 890 pounds of mercury has been released from Rhode Island
autos over the past 30 years and an equal amount could be released over the next two decades if
action is not taken soon to recover the mercury from vehicles before they are scrapped; and
WHEREAS, The Mercury Reduction and Education Act exempts mercury-added
components as contained in motor vehicles from the disposal ban (23-24.9-9) and collection plan
(23-24.9-10); and
WHEREAS, The state currently has no system to address the need to collect mercury

Introduced By: Representative Peter T. Giniat
Date Introduced: June 10, 2004
Referred To: House Environment and Natural Resources
added to auto parts before they are incinerated or otherwise released into the environment; and

WHEREAS, Mercury from auto parts threatens the health of Rhode Islanders, and the
Rhode Island Health Department warns young children and pregnant or nursing women not to eat
any freshwater fish caught in Rhode Island due to mercury contamination; and

WHEREAS, The state of Maine has successfully implemented a mercury switch
collection program which has withstood legal challenges and is effectively collecting mercury-
added switches for recycling; and

WHEREAS, An effective mercury product recycling system must be convenient and
minimize costs to taxpayers and to consumers; and

WHEREAS, Auto manufacturers should be responsible for ensuring proper handling,
recycling and disposal of discarded products and that costs associated with consolidation, handling
and recycling be internalized by the manufacturers; and

WHEREAS, A system of producer responsibility for the collection and recycling of
mercury-added auto parts is the most effective and equitable means of keeping this toxic waste
out of the waste stream and environment, while also providing and a powerful incentive for
manufacturers to reduce toxins and re-design products for recycling; and

WHEREAS, Auto manufacturers should have the flexibility to act in partnership with
each other, with state, municipal and regional governments and with businesses that provide
collection and handling services to develop, implement and promote a safe and effective
recycling system for mercury-added auto parts; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
Providence Plantations hereby respectfully urges the Mercury Reduction Oversight Commission
to develop a plan to address the collection and recycling of mercury added auto parts in a manner
that is convenient and minimizes costs to taxpayers and consumers; and

RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
Providence Plantations hereby respectfully urges the Mercury Reduction Oversight Commission
to submit to the General Assembly no later than January 30, 2005 a recommended plan, including
any legislation necessary to implement the plan, for the collection and recycling of mercury-
added auto parts that utilizes producer responsibility; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to
submit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Chair of the Mercury Reduction Oversight
Commission, and all of the commission members.

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