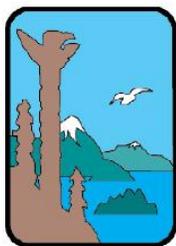


ALASKA
Department of
Environmental
Conservation



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 25, 2010

**CONTACT: DEC Environmental Health Director Kristin Ryan, (907) 269-7654
U.S. EPA, Region 10, Public Affairs Specialist Hanady Aisha Kader,
(206) 553-0454; 206.225.8127 (cell)**

Alaska Quicksilver Summit October 27th and 28th, Girdwood Two-day meeting on mercury starts Wednesday

The Alaska Contaminant Monitoring Strategy Steering Committee will host a summit to discuss how mercury is transported to Alaska by as ocean currents, air circulation patterns as well as how mercury concentrates in fish, animals and humans. The two-day meeting on October 27 and 28 will take place at the Alyeska Hotel in Girdwood.

Forms of mercury in the environment are neurotoxins. They are transported here largely from sources in Europe and Asia through atmospheric deposition as well as marine transport in our oceans. "Mercury contamination and its health impacts are a serious concern and we are pleased to bring together this group of scientists and health experts with broad expertise to look at this global problem," said DEC Commissioner Larry Hartig.

The conference follows nearly two years of work by a group of leaders and scientists in various organizations including the University of Alaska, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services under the leadership of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

An Alaska Contaminant Monitoring Strategy Committee was established with the goal to unite organizations, share contaminant information, and jointly set research priorities for the various organizations responsible for Alaska's people and natural resources. Using the framework they developed, mercury was chosen as the first contaminant to test this collaborative approach.

"Mercury contamination is a real danger and I'm excited to see so many knowledgeable players together at the same table to share information," said Marcia Combes, EPA's director in Alaska. "Our hope is to shed light on mercury in our environment and talk about solutions."

A full agenda is here: www.signup4.net/public/ap.aspx?EID=QUIC28E&OID=110

Information on the on the goals, priorities and work of the Alaska Contaminant Monitoring Strategy Steering Committee is available here: <http://www.akcontaminants.org/>