Rapid Installation of Dental Amalgam Separators

Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
September 2010 to December 2012
$250,000
Top 3 Accomplishments/Impacts

- Rebate program helped us get the dental community to voluntarily install equipment that they wouldn’t have otherwise.
- 326 dentists installed separators within a 6 month window.
- Found some dentists who we didn’t even know about.
Other wastewater treatment plants in the Great Lakes drainage area could benefit from using a rebate program to incentivize installation of dental amalgam separators. Installation of separators keeps particulate mercury contained at the source (rather than rolling around in the sewer system). This also makes it available for recycling.
Ecosystem and Management Improvements

- Results will impact the ecosystem through reduced input of a bioaccumulative toxin
Public Benefits from Project

- Reduced exposure to mercury emissions from biosolids incineration
- Eventually, through reduced mercury exposure when eating locally caught fish (less consumption advisories)
- Installation of separators preserves the availability of mercury amalgam as a treatment option
Each dental office who participated saved $500 on the cost of a dental amalgam separator

Regionally $141,997.56 was disbursed through rebates

Economic benefit to local suppliers of separators
Future fish tissue studies to evaluate effect on ecosystem

Continued monitoring of influent, effluent and biosolids concentrations at NEORSD plants
Other agencies could build off the incentive model.
Separators are just one piece in the puzzle. Other toxin reduction efforts are necessary to achieve a strong effect.