

IGI North American President to Join Mercury Free Mining (MFM) Board

NEW YORK (Aug. 23, 2021) — The International Gemological Institute (IGI), the world’s largest independent gemological laboratory, is advancing its sustainability efforts through IGI President of North America Avi Levy’s appointment to the Mercury Free Mining (MFM) board of directors. Mercury, a traditional component in the gold separation process, is toxic to the environment and can have long-lasting health impacts on those exposed, including miners, and especially women who may become pregnant, developing fetuses, infants and youth who have developing nervous systems. In partnership with MFM, Levy will actively campaign to see mercury use in gold mining become irrelevant through education and funding research that explores alternative methods.

“As we learn more every day about the threat climate change poses to our planet, we at IGI know – for this historically mining-based industry – it is crucial the gemological community restores the environment and combats pollution,” said Levy. “As a lifelong learner, I am inspired by sustainable advances being made within the sector and happy to be collaborating with Mercury Free Mining as a board member and be part of the solution. IGI is constantly focused on identifying opportunities for engagement in worthwhile initiatives and aspires to lead others to do the same.”

Mercury has been used for thousands of years by miners to concentrate gold and since no easy, affordable, safe and efficient alternatives are available to them, miners are forced to use what they have, a potent neurotoxin. Thirty-seven percent of the world's mercury emissions is a result of artisanal and small-scale gold mining, which is responsible for over 12,000 tonnes per year according to the United Nations Environment Program.

“It is thrilling for me to witness the jewelry industry coming together to address the centuries-old problem of mercury pollution from gold mining. It is extraordinary to see leaders of an industry dedicating their time, energies and money to the eradicating of mercury use in mining, contributing to the wellbeing of 20 million miners, their families and our environment,” said Toby Pomeroy, Executive Director, Mercury Free Mining Inc.

Launched in 2017, MFM was created with a vision of inspiring the jewelry industry to address mercury emissions through identifying environmentally safe, effective systems to concentrate gold that meets the needs of the particular mining organization. MFM is committed to maintaining and enhancing the public’s trust in the jewelry industry gold supply chain.

To learn more about IGI and its offerings, please visit www.igi.org and gemblog.igi.org. To learn about MFM and its mission, please visit www.mercuryfreemining.org.

About IGI

The International Gemological Institute (IGI) has 20 laboratories and 14 education facilities in major diamond and jewelry centers around the world. For 45 years, IGI has provided the fine jewelry community and consumers with a broad range of services including natural and laboratory grown diamond reports, colored stone grading and origin reports, as well as jewelry identification and appraisal reports. With the increase of lab grown diamonds in the marketplace, IGI screens millions of natural and lab grown diamonds in order for the industry and consumers to receive the product they expect. Regardless of location or marketplace, an authentic IGI Laboratory Report is the common language of trust and confidence in the gemological world.