

A collaborative project by:

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE

**CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL
LAW ASSOCIATION**



PollutionWatch Fact Sheet **National Pollution Highlights**

Most pollutants in Canada dumped into the air

- Most pollutants released by companies across Canada were dumped into the air in 2003, according to the latest data from Environment Canada's National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI).
- More than 4.1 billion kilograms (4,165,490,502 kg) of pollutants were released into the air from industrial facilities in 2003, including Criteria Air Contaminants and toxic contaminants (90% of total releases and transfers reported).
- Some of these pollutants are associated with asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, stroke, heart attacks and cancer, and environmental effects such as smog and acid rain.

Alberta led country in air pollution

- Alberta led the country in releases of air pollutants in 2003 (1,074,612,102 kilograms of combined toxic and Criteria Air Contaminant air releases), accounting for about 25% of Canada's total air pollutants (4,165,490,502 kilograms) reported to NPRI.
- Ontario facilities reported about 21% of Canada's total air pollutants (888, 679,330 kilograms of combined air releases), and led the country in air releases of carcinogens.
- Quebec facilities reported about 17% of Canada's total air pollutants (727,939,562 kilograms of combined air releases).

Inco: top air polluter in Canada

- Inco Limited reported the largest combined air releases of any company in Canada in 2003 (368,624,879 kilograms), based on NPRI data.
- Alcan Inc. and Ontario Power Generation were ranked #2 and #3 for combined air releases in Canada.
- Nova Scotia Power Inc. and Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company Ltd. were ranked #4 and #5 for combined air releases.
- Companies may report combined air releases for one or more facilities across Canada.

National Overview

- Total releases and transfers of pollutants in 2003: 4,645,166,896 kilograms.
- Combined air releases of toxic pollutants (such as mercury and lead) and Criteria Air Contaminants (smog-forming pollutants) in 2003: 4,165,490,502 kilograms.
- Total water releases in 2003: 102,313,716 kilograms.

Profile of releases and transfers by potential health effects:

- Air releases of pollutants with suspected respiratory effects in 2003: 4,059,825,916 kilograms.
- Air releases of pollutants suspected of causing cancer in 2003: 8,654,343 kilograms.
- Air releases of pollutants associated with developmental and reproductive effects in 2003: 1,061,322,417 kilograms.
- Air releases of pollutants considered to be toxic under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* in 2003: 990,961,171 kilograms.

Other health effects lists, such as endocrine disruptors, are available on www.PollutionWatch.org

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National Trends (1995-2003)

- PollutionWatch trends are based on analyses of 158 core pollutants that have been consistently reported to Environment Canada's NPRI program since 1995.
- Criteria Air Contaminants, which cause smog and acid rain, are not included in the trend analysis because facilities only started reporting them in 2002. Recycling and energy recovery are also not included in these time trends as reporting only became mandatory in 1998.
- The PollutionWatch trends are presented in two ways: first, using all facilities that reported in each year; secondly, using only those core facilities that reported in each year between 1995 and 2003. Both trends use core pollutants – only those pollutants that have been consistently reported between 1995 and 2003.

Releases and Transfers of Core Pollutants (1995-2003)

- Reported releases and transfers of toxic pollutants continue to increase in Canada. From 1995- 2003, releases and transfers of pollutants increased from 198,038,625 kilograms to 314,364,435 kilograms, an increase of 59%.
- Air releases increased from 92,187,422 kilograms in 1995 to 104,584,666 kilograms in 2003, an increase of 13%.
- Air releases of core pollutants with suspected respiratory effects increased from 67,599,720 in 1995 to 84,523,169 in 2003, an increase of 25%.

Releases and Transfers of Core Pollutants from Core Facilities (1995-2003)

- Trends in pollution from core facilities reporting core pollutants were similar to the overall trends in pollution described above. From 1995-2003, releases and transfers of core pollutants from core facilities increased from 165,126,949 kilograms to 185,426,603 kilograms, an increase of 12%.
- Air releases of core pollutants from core facilities decreased slightly from 82,904,746 kilograms in 1995 to 81,315,200 kilograms in 2003, a decrease of 2%.
- Air releases of core pollutants with suspected respiratory effects from core facilities increased from 58,930,486 kilograms in 1995 to 66,797,457 kilograms in 2003, an increase of 13%.

Recommendations

The *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*, Canada's national pollution law, is set to undergo its legally-required 5-year review this fall. Environmental Defence and the Canadian Environmental Law Association are calling on the federal government to take the lead in significantly reducing pollution across Canada, beginning with:

- virtually eliminating releases of carcinogens to the air and water by 2008;
- ensuring that pollution prevention targets receive significant consideration and discussion in the upcoming CEPA review;
- increasing the number of facilities preparing and implementing pollution prevention plans; and
- ensuring resources are directed to enhance and expand the NPRI program

Notes on PollutionWatch analysis

- The air pollution analysis was generated using the PollutionWatch web site (www.PollutionWatch.org) which provides Canadians with the most complete picture to date of reported releases and transfers in their communities and across Canada between 1995 and 2003, the latest data available. PollutionWatch uses data from Environment Canada's national reporting program – the National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI).
- Because NPRI data only reflect a portion of pollution in Canada, the PollutionWatch analyses are very conservative estimates of the total amount of pollutants released and transferred across the country. NPRI data do not include all pollutants (only 323 pollutants are reported) or all sources (mobile sources such as cars and trucks, agricultural sources and small facilities are some sources not included in NPRI).

- Environment Canada notes that the number of facilities reporting increased from 2001 to 2003 due to changes in reporting requirements (including the addition of Criteria Air Contaminants) and increased compliance promotion activities.
- This increase in the number of facilities may be a factor in some time trends. In addition, a number of sectors (such as pulp and paper) have changed their reporting methods over time, which may be a factor in some time trends.
- Facilities may also report increases or decreases over time for a variety of reasons: change in process, chemical use or production; recently started or gone out of business; change in reporting requirements, estimation methods or guidance materials; and, increased education, outreach and enforcement of the NPRI reporting program.

PollutionWatch has produced a series of fact sheets outlining releases and transfers of pollutants in 2003 nationally and in five provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. Detailed facility and company information for all provinces and communities across Canada is available on the PollutionWatch web site – www.PollutionWatch.org.

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About PollutionWatch (www.PollutionWatch.org) is a collaborative project of Environmental Defence and the Canadian Environmental Law Association. The web site tracks releases and transfers of pollutants across Canada based on data collected by Environment Canada through the National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI). NPRI does not include data from all pollutants or sources. Visitors to the PollutionWatch web site can identify facilities in their home towns by searching by postal code, access “quick lists” of the facilities reporting the largest releases and transfers of pollutants in the country, get trends from 1995-2003, or create their own ranked lists of facilities by province, industrial sector, or corporation.

The data used in this PollutionWatch Fact Sheet is based on the federal National Pollutant Release Inventory, a publicly available database administered by Environment Canada. PollutionWatch classifies releases, disposals and transfers differently than Environment Canada’s NPRI program. These varying methods of presentation will yield different perspectives on the data. PollutionWatch makes no warranties or representation of any kind with respect to its contents and disclaims all such representations and warranties. Neither PollutionWatch nor any other person acting on its behalf makes any warranty, expressed or implied, or assumes any legal responsibility for the accuracy of any information or accepts liability from the use or damages from the use.

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