



CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DU DROIT DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

For Immediate Release

May 24, 2005

New Report Provides More Pollution Bad News: Ontario one of top polluters, again...

Toronto, Ontario – In *Taking Stock*, the annual review of North American pollution emissions, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) confirms that over 3.25 million tonnes of chemicals were released and transferred in North America in 2002. This number is always an underestimate since the report only counts, for the most part, emissions from larger facilities. As well, it only looks at those chemicals that are “matched”, that is, they are released in both the US and Canada (in this year’s tally, from 24,192 facilities). Air pollution continues to be the big problem with almost one-quarter of pollutants released to the air. According to the CEC report, Canadian total releases and transfers increased by 7% from 1998 to 2002 while releases and transfers decreased in the U.S. by 8%. Also during that time period, facilities in Canada showed an increase in on site releases of pollutants by 5% as well as an increase in transfers to recycling by 32%.

According to the CEC report, data for Ontario remains at alarming levels ranking second amongst states and provinces in North America in overall releases and transfers in 2002. Ontario continues a multi-year trend of being among the top-ranking jurisdictions for pollution emissions in North America. The CEC report also puts the spotlight on lead, a probable human carcinogen, linked to birth defects, and well-known to damage fetal and early childhood brain development. Canadian facilities are emitting much more lead than their US counterparts and are among the worst polluters in North America.

“The amount of pollution entering the North American environment is simply enormous. Ontario continues to be a bad actor and Canada seriously lags behind the US in getting industrial lead emissions under control,” noted Paul Muldoon, Executive Director of the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

A total of 26% of Canada's total releases and transfers for 2002 (over 116 million tonnes) were released to air by facilities required to report emissions within Environment Canada’s National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI) program. In the US, 23% of total pollutants released and transferred (over 1,157 million tonnes) were released to air by facilities required to report emissions within that country’s Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) program.

“This report should spur quick and decisive government action to stop more carcinogens and developmental toxins from entering our environment,” stated Sarah Winterton, Programme Director of Environmental Defence

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