

Toxics Release Inventory/Community Right-to-Know: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Announces Plan to Address Environmental Justice



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The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) issued an April 29th news release outlining a plan to “update the Toxics Release Inventory to advance Environmental Justice.”

EPA states that it will be undertaking activities related to the Toxics Release Inventory (“TRI”) to:

- Advance Environmental Justice
- Improve transparency
- Increase access to environmental information

The TRI is a publicly available database that contains information on toxic chemical releases and other waste management activities reported annually to EPA by certain covered industry groups as well as federal facilities. The TRI was established pursuant to the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 and was subsequently expanded by the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990. Facilities in certain industries which manufacture, process, or use significant amounts of toxic chemicals, are required to report on their releases of these chemicals on an annual basis.

“Environmental Justice” is described by EPA as the:

... fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

Fair treatment is described by EPA as meaning that:

... no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies.

EPA describes in the April 29th news release that its comprehensive plan related to the TRI includes:

- Expanding the scope of TRI reporting requirements to include additional chemicals and facilities (including facilities that are not currently reporting on ethylene oxide (EtO) to address such releases)
- Provide additional tools to make TRI data more accessible to the public

Specific components described in the EPA news release include:

- TRI Facility Expansion to Include Certain Contract Sterilizers using EtO
- TRI Reporting for Natural Gas Processing Facilities

- TRI Reporting for Additional Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
- TRI Reporting for Toxic Substance Control Act Workplan and High-Priority Chemicals
- Enhancing TRI search tools to include a “Demographic Profile” section displaying a map showing information like the income profile and the racial makeup surrounding TRI facilities
- Providing a Spanish version of the TRI website
- Promoting the Use of Pollution Prevention Information as a tool for communities to engage with reporting facilities on workable solutions for building community health by encouraging facilities to reduce their use and releases of toxic chemicals . . .

A copy of the news release can be found [here](#).