



# COOK • INLET • KEEPER

Protecting Alaska's Cook Inlet watershed and the life it sustains

## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **COOK INLET RANKS HIGH IN TOXIC RELEASES**

*EPA Data Show Region Leads State in Manufacturing Pollution*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today released its latest Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) data for reporting year 2002. The TRI annually tracks the amounts and types of toxic chemicals discharged from various industrial facilities to the nation's land, air and water. Cook Inlet continues to lead the State in non-mining, manufacturing-related toxic discharges, with more than 1.9 million pounds of toxic pollution released to the region's land, air and water. Due to reporting limitations, this figure does not include the billions of gallons of toxic production and drilling wastes from Cook Inlet oil and gas production operations.

Alaska ranked fourth nationwide for toxic releases, largely due to high toxic waste figures from the state's mining industry. Overall, Alaska industries reported over 547 million pounds of toxic chemicals discharged to the state's land, air and water. Agrium's Nikiski fertilizer plant led all Alaskan manufacturing facilities with toxic releases comprised largely of ammonia totaling 1,773,482 pounds. The Tesoro refinery in Nikiski released 96,706 pounds of toxic emissions, including over 50,000 pounds of cancer-causing chemicals. Kenai Pipeline reported over 16,000 pounds of toxic releases, and Fort Richardson reported over 9,000 pounds of lead releases.

"The TRI helps citizens learn about toxic chemicals in their communities, and it has motivated various industries to decrease their toxic emissions," said Cook Inlet Keeper Bob Shavelson. "Yet these TRI reports are only a small fraction of the actual toxic discharges to Cook Inlet. For example, they don't include the billions of gallons of toxic pollution discharged each year into Cook Inlet by oil & gas production, spills, polluted run-off and sewage treatment plants."

Under the Toxics Release Inventory program, nearly 25,000 factories, refineries, mines, power plants, and chemical manufacturers self-report to EPA emissions of toxic pollution to air, water, and land. Excluding metal mining, industries nationwide reported 4.79 billion pounds of toxic chemical releases in 2002, an increase of 5.0 percent from the prior year. Most TRI data derives from industry estimates – rather than actual monitoring – and a new report by the Environmental Integrity Project notes that "systematic underreporting" of TRI releases has led to artificially low figures for toxic emissions. See <http://www.environmentalintegrity.org/pub205.cfm>

EPA's reporting Year 2002 TRI data for Alaska can be viewed at: <http://www.epa.gov/tri>

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