

## **14 GROUPS: EPA SHOULD CLOSE LOOPHOLE ALLOWING NEARLY 400 OIL & GAS SITES IN SIX STATES TO AVOID PUBLIC REPORTING OF MILLIONS OF POUNDS OF TOXIC POLLUTION ANNUALLY**

***395 Facilities Identified in CO, LA, ND, PA, TX, and WY, Each Emitting over 10,000 Pounds of Toxic Chemicals Per Year.***

**WASHINGTON, D.C.//January 30, 2014**///Hundreds of large oil and gas facilities in six energy boom states -- Colorado, Louisiana, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wyoming – are emitting a combined 8.5 million tons of toxic chemicals each year, according to new data compiled by the nonprofit Environmental Integrity Project (EIP). The EIP report details why the toxic emissions should be reported to the public Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), managed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), but are not due to an arbitrary loophole that exempts the oil and gas extraction industry from such disclosure.

Available online at [http://www.environmentalintegrity.org/news\\_reports/01\\_30\\_2014.php](http://www.environmentalintegrity.org/news_reports/01_30_2014.php), the new EIP data provides powerful new support for an October 2012 petition urging EPA action to close the TRI loophole. The data on the impact of the reporting loophole in the six states was submitted to EPA today by EIP and 13 other groups. (See list below.)

EIP found that 395 facilities in the oil and gas extraction industry each emitted over 10,000 pounds of at least one toxic chemical, the annual threshold that would require reporting to the TRI in other industries. Texas led the list of six states with 209 sites, followed by: Colorado (124); Louisiana (34); Wyoming (14); Pennsylvania (13); and North Dakota (1). Nearly 200 of the sites surpassed this threshold two or more years in a row, according to EIP.

EIP surveyed the industry for ten TRI-listed chemicals, including toxics such as formaldehyde, benzene, and hexane. TRI reporting requirements apply to facilities that use or process more than 10,000 pounds of any listed chemical. The facilities identified in the EIP report are far above this threshold, because their reported emissions will usually represent just one to two percent of the total amount used or processed. EIP noted that the facilities may actually be using or processing more than 500,000 pounds of each toxic chemical.

Eric Schaeffer, executive director, Environmental Integrity Project, said: **“We are in the middle of an oil and gas boom, but have far too little information about the environmental consequences. Our research shows that many of these oil and gas plants emit tens of thousands of pounds of toxic pollutants every year, but that data was hard to get and incomplete. We need this industry to report that pollution to the Toxics Release Inventory where everyone can see it – just like chemical plants and other facilities have done for more than 20 years.**”

Sharon Wilson, Texas organizer, Earthworks Oil and Gas Accountability Project, said: **“The Toxics Release Inventory would require fracking companies to give people information about threats to their families’ health. Without the TRI, the oil and gas industry not only pollutes with impunity, it’s not even required to inform the people it is poisoning.”**

Dan Randolph, executive director, San Juan Citizens Alliance, said: **“Only with accurate knowledge of releases can the public and the regulators, as well as industry itself, have a meaningful debate. It is in everyone’s interest to have access to data. Without this, we will only continue to talk past one another.”**

Robert (Bob) Donnan, citizen advocate of McMurray, Washington County, Pennsylvania, said: **“Communities in the tristate area of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia are literally being surrounded by dangerous emissions from major gas processing facilities that are not being properly controlled or reported. These communities have a right to know what they are being exposed to. Someone should be measuring the growing cumulative impacts.”**

Adam Kron, attorney, Environmental Integrity Project, said: **“By adding the oil and gas extraction industry to the TRI, EPA would make available to the public high-quality and unique information on the toxic chemicals that each oil and gas facility releases to the air, land, and water. This information is critical to individual health, community planning, and the decision making of local, state, and federal governments. If EPA finally requires the oil and gas industry to report to the TRI, the public could obtain this data online for free without any delay.”**

For industries not exempted from reporting, the TRI provides free and publicly accessible information in a searchable online database. Facilities annually report the amount of each toxic chemical they use and how the chemicals were released or disposed of: e.g., to the air, land, or water. By contrast, the state emissions inventories from which EIP drew its data are reported on varying time cycles, exclude certain facilities, are not all available online without charge, and provide data only on air releases—and not releases to water or land. The groups’ letter notes that TRI reporting would provide far better information, and this weighs strongly in favor of requiring the oil and gas extraction industry to report to the TRI.

The data and letter urging EPA’s action were submitted by the Environmental Integrity Project on behalf of the Center for Effective Government (formerly OMB Watch), Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Citizen Shale, Clean Air Council, Clean Water Action, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Earthworks, Environment America, Environmental Advocates of New York, Natural Resources Defense Council, PennEnvironment, San Juan Citizens Alliance, and Texas Campaign for the Environment.

### **ABOUT EIP**

The Environmental Integrity Project (<http://www.environmentalintegrity.org>) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization established in March of 2002 by former EPA enforcement attorneys to advocate for effective enforcement of environmental laws. EIP has three goals: 1) to provide objective analyses of how the failure to enforce or implement environmental laws increases pollution and affects public health; 2) to hold federal and state agencies, as well as individual corporations, accountable for failing to enforce or comply with environmental laws; and 3) to help local communities obtain the protection of environmental laws.

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**EDITOR’S NOTE:** A streaming audio replay of this news event will be available as of 3 p.m. EST on January 30, 2014 at <http://www.environmentalintegrity.org>.