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UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR NEW JERSEY



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LAUTENBERG ISSUES STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF NEW REPORT ON BUSH PLAN TO LIMIT AMOUNT OF INFORMATION MADE AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC ON TOXIC CHEMICALS

NEWARK, N.J. - Today, the non-profit organization OMB Watch issued a report analyzing the public comments provided to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) concerning their proposal to limit the amount of public information available on the management and release of toxic chemicals into the environment from industrial facilities across the country. The report found that 122,386 (99.97) percent of the 122,420 comments to the agency from groups or individuals strongly opposed EPA's proposals to weaken the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) program. Senator Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ), who created the program in 1986, issued the following statement in response to the report by OMB Watch:

"Today's report underscores the depth and breadth of opposition to the Bush Administration's proposals to gut the TRI program. It remains an open question whether the Bush EPA is really listening to this overwhelming opposition to curtailing the public's right to know about toxic releases into their communities.

Although the Bush administration has abandoned its proposal to only collect and report information on releases every-other-year, it still plans to shield more toxic releases from detailed disclosure – and weaken reporting requirements for management of lead, mercury and other persistent toxic chemicals.

I hope the EPA will make the right choice and abandon the rest of its ill-advised proposal. However, if they go forward, I will work with my colleagues in the House and the Senate to reverse that decision."

OMB Watch is a nonprofit organization dedicated to open government, accountability and citizen participation.

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