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PALLONE, SOLIS: PUBLIC COMMENTS SHOW DESIRE TO PROTECT TOXIC RIGHT-TO-KNOW REGULATIONS

Washington, D.C. – *Reps. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Hilda L. Solis (D-CA) the Ranking Democrat of the Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials, issued the following statement today in conjunction with the release of "Against the Public's Will," a report by OMB Watch summarizing public comments on the Environmental Protection Agency's proposal to gut reporting requirements of the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI).*

Earlier this year, Pallone and Solis passed an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2007 Interior-Environment Appropriations Act to prevent EPA from finalizing their proposal. That amendment is awaiting final action by both the House and Senate. The lawmakers reaffirmed their commitment to protecting community right-to-know under the TRI program with the introduction of the Toxic Right to Know Protection Act (H.R. 6219).

"Americans who live near industrial facilities want to know what's going into their air and water," Pallone said. "This report shows that the public supports the original intent of the TRI program -- to give communities the right to know what kinds of toxic chemicals are being dumped in their backyards. If EPA does not heed the overwhelming majority of comments and finalizes its proposal, we will take every step necessary to stop it in Congress."

"It's no surprise that more than 99.9 percent of the comments received by EPA strongly opposed the agency's proposal to gut reporting requirements," Solis added. "It's also telling that stakeholders, including local and state governments, first responders, and public health officials, strongly oppose EPA's proposal. TRI provides critical information that helps communities plan for and mitigate catastrophic events and long-term health impacts and I am committed to protecting this program."

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