

TRI - 2005 - 0073



**STEVE WESTLY**  
**California State Controller**

January 13, 2006

01-25-06 P03:09 IN

Office of Environmental Information (OEI) Docket  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Mail Code: 28221T  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW.  
Washington, DC 20460

Attention Docket ID No. TRI-2005-0073.

Dear Sir or Madam:

I strongly oppose efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to move forward with its proposed changes to the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI). TRI is a public database of information on toxic chemical releases and other activities by industrial plants and facilities.

In 1986, Congress created TRI in response to the catastrophic release of toxic chemicals from the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India that killed thousands of people. TRI is updated annually, and it allows members of the public to obtain detailed reports of toxics released in their neighborhoods. Residents of Butler County, Pennsylvania used the database to learn that AK Steel Corporation had released 60 million pounds of nitrates into a local creek in 1997 and 1998. Subsequent public pressure led the government to take action against the company.

TRI also assists first responders and public health officials deal with incidents involving toxics. The proposed cutbacks are especially troubling in light of the essential role that TRI played in helping officials address toxic chemical releases caused by Hurricane Katrina.

The EPA's proposed changes will make it harder for people to track toxic pollution in our neighborhoods and to protect our health. Weakening TRI would protect polluters at the expense of our families. I strongly oppose this proposed rule and urge the EPA to instead protect communities by improving toxics reporting.

Sincerely,

STEVE WESTLY  
California State Controller

SW/jh/ca

JAN 13 2006

cc: Members, California Congressional delegation

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