

November 18, 2005

Administrator Stephen L. Johnson
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, DC 20460

Dear EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson,

As a physician working near a superfund site, I am writing in strong opposition to the EPA's proposed changes to the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) program. These proposed changes would cripple communities' abilities to understand and prevent important sources of disease.

For almost twenty years, the program has improved the health of many communities around the country by providing critical data about the toxic chemicals in our land, water, and air. If adopted, the EPA's "TRI Burden Reduction Proposed Rule" would take away an important tool for protecting public health and the environment.

By denying the public, along with federal, state, and local governments access to up-to-date information on hazardous chemical releases, EPA would violate the requirements of the Emergency Planning & Community Right-to-Know Act. Your agency itself has demonstrated the usefulness of TRI data in the 2003 report, "How Are the Toxics Release Inventory Data Used."

Raising the reporting threshold to ten times its current level, moving from annual reporting to every other year reporting, and allowing for less-detailed reporting on PBT chemicals poses a significant threat to the well-being of all citizens. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the EPA should recognize that there is a need for more, not less, reporting on toxic hazards in our environment.

As a Family Physician, I strongly urge the EPA to abandon all of its burden reduction proposals in the docket TRI-2005-0073 and to withdraw its plans announced to Congress to move from an annual reporting system to a biennial reporting system.

You have th opportunity to prevent tens of thousands of deaths caused every year by toxic releases -- simply by maintaining surveillance programs at their current level.

Sincerely,

Megan Schwarzman
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USA