

A collaborative project by:

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE

**CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL
LAW ASSOCIATION**

PollutionWatch
www.PollutionWatch.org

PollutionWatch Fact Sheet **Alberta Pollution Highlights**

Most pollutants in Alberta dumped into the air

- Most pollutants released by companies in Alberta were dumped into the air in 2003, according to the latest data from Environment Canada.
- **More than 1 billion kilograms (1,074,612,102) of pollutants were released into the air from industrial facilities in Alberta in 2003**, including Criteria Air Contaminants and toxic contaminants.
- Some of these pollutants are associated with asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, stroke, heart attacks and cancer, and environmental effects such as smog and acid rain.

Alberta led the country in air pollution

- Alberta led the country in releases of air pollutants in 2003 (1,074,612,102 kilograms of combined toxic and Criteria Air Contaminant air releases), accounting for 25% of Canada's total air pollutants reported to Environment Canada's National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI).
- Syncrude Canada's Mildred Lake Plant reported the largest combined toxic (such as mercury and lead) and Criteria Air Contaminants (smog-causing pollutants) air releases of any facility in Alberta in 2003 (120,025,221 kilograms). TransAlta's Sundance Generating Facility was ranked #2, Sheerness Generating Station #3, ATCO Power's Battle River Generating Station #4 and Suncor's Oil Sands facility #5.

Alberta Overview

- Total releases and transfers of pollutants reported in Alberta in 2003: 1,248,907,589 kilograms, ranked #1 in Canada.
- Combined air releases of toxic pollutants (such as mercury and lead) and Criteria Air Contaminants (smog-forming substances) in 2003: 1,074,612,102 kilograms, ranked #1 in Canada.
- Total water releases in 2003: 17,013,548 kilograms, ranked #2 in Canada.

Alberta profile of releases and transfers by potential health effects:

- Air releases of pollutants with suspected respiratory effects in 2003: 1,054,972,143 kilograms, ranked #1 in Canada.
- Air releases of pollutants suspected of causing cancer in 2003: 2,074,081 kilograms, ranked #2 in Canada.
- Air releases of pollutants with suspected developmental and reproductive effects in 2003: 226,626,130 kilograms, ranked #2 in Canada.
- Air releases of pollutants considered toxic under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* in 2003: 415,256,993 kilograms, ranked #1 in Canada.

Other health effects lists, such as endocrine disruptors, are available on www.PollutionWatch.org.

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Alberta Trends (1995-2003)

- PollutionWatch trends are based on analyses of 158 core pollutants that have been consistently reported to Environment Canada's NPRI program since 1995.
- Criteria Air Contaminants, which cause smog and acid rain, are not included in the trend analysis because facilities only started reporting them in 2002. Recycling and energy recovery are also not included in these time trends as reporting only became mandatory in 1998.
- The PollutionWatch trends are presented in two ways: first, using all facilities that reported in each year; secondly, using only those core facilities that reported in each year between 1995 and 2003. Both trends use core pollutants – only those pollutants that have been consistently reported between 1995 and 2003.

Releases and Transfers of Core Pollutants (1995-2003)

- Reported releases and transfers of toxic pollutants are increasing in Alberta. From 1995-2003, releases and transfers of pollutants in Alberta increased from 41,280,725 kilograms to 65,027,917 kilograms, an increase of 58%.
- Air releases remained virtually unchanged from 23,731,097 kilograms in 1995 to 23,840,959 kilograms in 2003.
- Air releases of pollutants with suspected respiratory effects increased from 11,811,088 in 1995 to 14,489,315 in 2003, an increase of 23%.

Releases and Transfers of Core Pollutants from Core Facilities (1995-2003)

- Releases and transfers of core pollutants from core facilities decreased from 36,021,934 kilograms in 1995 to 35,338,674 kilograms in 2003, a decrease of 2%.
- Air releases of core pollutants from core facilities decreased from 20,192,859 kilograms in 1995 to 17,748,206 kilograms in 2003, a decrease of 12%.
- Air releases of core pollutants with suspected respiratory effects from core facilities increased from 8,289,489 kilograms in 1995 to 10,435,998 kilograms in 2003, an increase of 26%.

Notes on PollutionWatch analysis

- The analysis was generated using the PollutionWatch web site (www.PollutionWatch.org), which provides Canadians with the most complete picture to date of reported releases and transfers in their communities and across Canada between 1995 and 2003, the latest data available. PollutionWatch uses data from Environment Canada's national reporting program – the National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI).
- Because NPRI data only reflect a portion of pollution in Canada, the PollutionWatch analyses are very conservative estimates of the total amount of pollutants released and transferred across the country. NPRI data do not include all pollutants (only 323 pollutants are reported) or all sources (mobile sources such as cars and trucks, agricultural sources and small facilities are some sources not included in NPRI).
- Environment Canada notes that the number of facilities reporting increased from 2001 to 2003 due to changes in reporting requirements (including the addition of Criteria Air Contaminants) and increased compliance promotion activities.
- This increase in the number of facilities may be a factor in some time trends. In addition, a number of sectors (such as pulp and paper) have changed their reporting methods over time, which may be a factor in some time trends.
- Facilities may also report increases or decreases over time for a variety of reasons: change in process, chemical use or production; recently started or gone out of business; change in reporting requirements, estimation methods or guidance materials; and, increased education, outreach and enforcement of the NPRI reporting program.

PollutionWatch has produced a series of fact sheets outlining releases and transfers of pollutants in 2003 nationally and in five provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. Detailed facility and company information for all provinces and communities across Canada is available on the PollutionWatch web site – **www.PollutionWatch.org**.

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About PollutionWatch (www.PollutionWatch.org) is a collaborative project of Environmental Defence and the Canadian Environmental Law Association. The web site tracks releases and transfers of pollutants across Canada based on data collected by Environment Canada through the National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI). NPRI does not include data from all pollutants or sources. Visitors to the PollutionWatch web site can identify facilities in their home towns by searching by postal code, access “quick lists” of the facilities reporting the largest releases and transfers of pollutants in the country, get trends from 1995-2003, or create their own ranked lists of facilities by province, industrial sector, or corporation.

The data used in this PollutionWatch Fact Sheet is based on the federal National Pollutant Release Inventory, a publicly available database administered by Environment Canada. PollutionWatch classifies releases, disposals and transfers differently than Environment Canada’s NPRI program. These varying methods of presentation will yield different perspectives on the data. PollutionWatch makes no warranties or representation of any kind with respect to its contents and disclaims all such representations and warranties. Neither PollutionWatch nor any other person acting on its behalf makes any warranty, expressed or implied, or assumes any legal responsibility for the accuracy of any information or accepts liability from the use or damages from the use.

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