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ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE

**CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL
LAW ASSOCIATION**

PollutionWatch
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MEDIA RELEASE

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New Information for Ontario's Drinking Water Source Protection Program

New report shows significant releases to air, water and land in source protection areas

Toronto – A new report shows that federal pollution data would give valuable additional information to the program created to protect sources of Ontarians' drinking water. The report, released today by the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) and Environmental Defence, tracks and maps pollution from facilities reporting to the federal government's National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI) in Ontario source protection areas and regions. These facilities release large amounts of chemicals to the air and water and the report recommends that these sources of pollution be included in assessing drinking water threats. While water releases may have been considered in most of the source protection regions, air releases have likely not been considered to date.

"This data from the NPRI is a reliable and valuable information source as to potentially significant sources of pollution to our drinking water in Ontario and should be taken into account as part of the source protection plans currently under development in Ontario," said Theresa McClenaghan, Executive Director of CELA.

Using data submitted to the NPRI in 2007 (the most recent validated data available), the report found that facilities in 18 source protection areas and regions released more than 32 million kilograms of toxic chemicals and 722 million kilograms of criteria air contaminants (pollutants that cause smog and acid rain) to the air. The report was prepared as part of the PollutionWatch project (www.PollutionWatch.org). This report is the first to map pollution levels for source protection areas and regions in the Great Lakes Basin, which are an important source of drinking water for over 11 million Ontarians. The table below displays the 18 source protection areas and regions in the Great Lakes Basin and the releases to air of toxics and criteria air contaminants from facilities in each of those regions.

About 1.5 million kilograms (over 6%) of the chemicals released to the air in source protection areas and regions are known or suspected of causing cancer, while almost 3 million kilograms (9%) of all air releases are known or suspected reproductive and developmental toxins. Examples of chemicals released include benzene and arsenic, both known or suspected carcinogens.

Facilities reporting to the NPRI in source protection areas and regions also reported 54 million kilograms of releases of chemicals to water. Examples of chemicals reported include ammonia, nitrate ion, phosphorus, chlorine, lead and cadmium. About 30% of the chemicals released to water are listed as toxic under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*.

The full report contains additional information which will benefit each of the drinking water source protection areas and regions. (See Backgrounder – Air Releases of Toxics and Criteria Air Contaminants from NPRI facilities in Ontario source protection area and region)

CELA and Environmental Defence are calling on the Ontario government to:

- recognize that air pollution is a major source of chemicals and nutrients to the Great Lakes and needs to be incorporated into Ontario's drinking water source protection program;
- increase the emphasis on protection of Great Lakes sources in the program;
- renew emphasis on the newer threats to Great Lakes drinking water systems;
- extend source protection coverage to a larger portion of Ontarians whose groundwater comes from private wells and surface water intakes;
- support implementation of the Toxics Reduction Strategy that result in reductions and elimination of toxic chemicals including carcinogens, reproductive developmental toxicants and endocrine disrupters; and,
- increase the use of NPRI data as a source of information in Ontario's drinking water source protection program.

"The data show that air pollutants released by facilities are potentially a significant threat to drinking water in Ontario, and should be taken into account by the source protection committees," said Mike Layton, Deputy Outreach Director, Environmental Defence.

The report can be downloaded from www.PollutionWatch.org and www.TheWaterHole.ca

About PollutionWatch (www.PollutionWatch.org): PollutionWatch 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) and emissions of greenhouse gases based on the federal government's mandatory Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting Program. NPRI and the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting Program do not include data from all pollutants or sources.

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For more information, or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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BACKGROUNDER

Air releases of toxics and criteria air contaminants from NPRI facilities in Ontario source protection areas in 2007

Name of Source Protection Area or Region	Air Releases of Toxics		Air Releases of Criteria Air Contaminants	
	(kg)	Rank	(kg)	Rank
Thames, Sydenham and Region Source Protection Region	8,052,597	1	160,322,237	2
Credit, Toronto and Central (CTC) Source Protection Region	5,759,408	2	57,987,754	5
Lake Erie Source Protection Region	4,432,363	3	137,833,920	3
Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region	4,210,997	4	68,376,439	4
Lakehead Source Protection Area	2,302,847	5	24,372,327	6
Greater Sudbury Source Protection Area	2,301,772	6	199,546,932	1
Raisin Region South Nation Source Protection Region	1,973,873	7	9,871,744	10
Essex Region Source Protection Area	1,061,357	8	11,941,758	8
South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Region	699,704	9	4,459,099	12
Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Region	457,918	10	3,288,285	14
Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Area	336,022	11	2,798,283	15
Sault Ste Marie Region Source Protection Area	316,719	12	13,397,049	7
Trent Conservation Coalition Source Protection Region	291,349	13	1,359,996	17
Cataraqui Source Protection Area	117,769	14	9,026,010	11
Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region	91,544	15	1,581,037	16
Quinte Source Protection Region	83,428	16	11,328,854	9
North Bay-Mattawa Source Protection Area	76,262	17	433,920	18
Saugeen, Grey Sauble, Northern Bruce Peninsula Source Protection Region	17,626	18	4,391,297	13
Total for Great Lakes SPAs	32,583,554		722,316,940	
Total for Ontario	34,527,678		785,293,902	
Total for Canada	111,116,071		4,199,406,696	

Note: In this table, "toxic chemicals" are those reported to NPRI in Parts 1, 2 and 3 and criteria air contaminants are those reported in Part 4 (sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, total particulate matter, PM less than or equal to 10 microns, PM less than or equal to 2.5 microns).