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# PollutionWatch

[www.PollutionWatch.org](http://www.PollutionWatch.org)

For Immediate Release

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## Great Lakes, Great Air Pollution

*New report shows Great Lakes basin home to more than 1 billion kilograms of air pollution*

**Toronto, Ontario** – Canadian facilities in the Great Lakes basin emitted more than 1 billion kilograms (1,061,751,370 kg) of pollutants to the air in 2002 that are linked to smog, acid rain, respiratory illnesses and damage to children's development, says a new report on pollution in the Great Lakes released today by Environmental Defence and the Canadian Environmental Law Association. The report, *Great Lakes, Great Pollution: Canadian Pollutant Releases and Transfers to the Great Lakes*, shows that pollution remains a significant problem nearly 30 years after Canadian and American governments signed the *Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement*, meant to ensure restoration and protection of Great Lakes water quality.

Released on national Clean Air Day and the day before the joint Canadian/American biennial conference on the Great Lakes sponsored by the International Joint Commission, the report reveals that the Great Lakes basin was home to 45% of all toxic air pollution reported in Canada in 2002.

The analysis, completed using the new Great Lakes search feature on [www.PollutionWatch.org](http://www.PollutionWatch.org), is based on data submitted by industry to Environment Canada for its national reporting program – the National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI). [PollutionWatch.org](http://www.PollutionWatch.org) is an interactive web site that tracks pollution across Canada.

“Canadian regulators are asleep at the switch to control pollution in the Great Lakes,” said Paul Muldoon, Executive Director, Canadian Environmental Law Association. “While Canadians think the problem has been dealt with, the data tells us something very different. These unacceptably high levels of pollution should be a key topic at the Great Lakes meeting in Kingston this week.”

For the first time, the PollutionWatch web site lists the Top 10 facilities in the Great Lakes basin releasing pollutants to the air. This includes criteria air contaminants, linked with smog, and toxic air pollutants, such as mercury and lead.

### Top 10 Canadian Facilities in the Great Lakes Basin Releasing Pollutants to the Air in 2002 (as reported to NPRI)

Rank	Facility	Company Name	Total Amount (kg)	Great Lake Basin
1	Copper Cliff Smelter Complex	Inco	243,336,568	Lake Huron
2	Nanticoke Generating Station	Ontario Power Generation	146,738,070	Lake Erie
3	Fonderie Horne	Noranda Inc.	63,189,034	St. Lawrence
4	Lambton Generating Station	Ontario Power Generation	54,039,176	Lake Erie
5	Smelter Complex	Falconbridge Limited	44,403,069	Lake Huron
6	Sarnia Refinery Plant	Imperial Oil	31,018,779	Lake Erie
7	Stelco Hamilton	Stelco Inc.	26,651,703	Lake Ontario
8	Lakeview Generating Station *	Ontario Power Generation	22,188,259	Lake Ontario
9	Sarnia Manufacturing Centre	Shell Canada Limited	15,878,559	Lake Erie
10	Nanticoke Refinery	Imperial Oil	15,370,119	Lake Erie

\*closed in April 2005 as part of Ontario's phase out of coal fired electricity plants

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Lake Erie ranks as the basin with the largest amount of reported air pollution, followed by Lake Huron, the St. Lawrence River basin, Lake Ontario and Lake Superior. The report also ranks Canadian facilities in the Great Lakes basin based on air releases of mercury, a neurotoxin harmful to children's health, and pollutants declared toxic under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*, Canada's national pollution law. The rankings are broken down for the entire Great Lakes basin, and for each individual lake. Rankings for any pollutant reported to NPRI by Canadian facilities in the Great Lakes basin can be found using the new Great Lakes button on **www.PollutionWatch.org**.

*Great Lakes, Great Pollution*, also found that facilities have made little reduction in air pollution. Analyzing the last five years of data, (1998 to 2002), toxic air releases of core chemicals from core facilities – those chemicals and facilities that have been consistently reported – have remained virtually unchanged with a reduction of less than 1%.

“With no real improvement in air releases over the past five years, there's not much to celebrate on Clean Air Day for people living in the Great Lakes area,” said Dr. Rick Smith, Executive Director, Environmental Defence. “We know air pollution is linked with more emergency room visits, more respiratory illnesses and more asthma attacks. And, we're now learning air pollution can be a factor in heart attacks and strokes. Our health depends on cleaner air.”

*Great Lakes, Great Pollution* recommends the provincial and federal governments take immediate action to significantly reduce pollution in the Great Lakes basin, including:

- a. accelerate timelines for the virtual elimination of persistent, bioaccumulative toxics by 2010 and provide assurance that targets under the *Canada-Ontario Agreement* and *Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement* are met on time;
- b. aim to virtually eliminate all carcinogens and endocrine disrupting substances by 2015. There should be at a minimum a 50% reduction of endocrine disrupting and carcinogenic substances within five years;
- c. develop or accelerate reduction and elimination targets for all other pollutants released and transferred in the Great Lakes basin;
- d. require that the targets be met through pollution prevention methods; and,
- e. prepare biennial reporting by governments to monitor and review progress in reducing and eliminating releases and transfers from facilities in the Great Lakes basin.

The biennial Great Lakes meeting, sponsored by the International Joint Commission, is taking place in Kingston, Ontario from Thursday, June 9 to Saturday, June 11, 2005.

*Great Lakes, Great Pollution* is available to download for free from the PollutionWatch web site **www.PollutionWatch.org**.

**About PollutionWatch** ([www.PollutionWatch.org](http://www.PollutionWatch.org)) is a collaborative project of Environmental Defence and the Canadian Environmental Law Association. The web site tracks 273 pollutants across Canada based on data collected by Environment Canada through the National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI). NPRI data are generally from larger industrial facilities and do not include data for all pollutants or sources. Visitors to the PollutionWatch web site can identify pollution in their home towns by searching by postal code, access “quick lists” of the largest sources of pollution in the country, get pollution trends from 1995-2002, or create their own ranked lists of pollution by province, industrial sector, or corporation.

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