

Ontario ranked as third largest air polluter in North America

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Canada is falling behind the United States when it comes to preventing air pollution according to a report released June 2 by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) of North America. The "Taking Stock" report analyzes the amounts of chemicals released and transferred by facilities throughout North America. This information is taken from publicly available data in Canada, the United States and Mexico.

"This report shows a very disturbing trend for Canada," says Anne Mitchell, Executive Director, Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP), "While chemical releases into the air are declining in the United States, they are remaining steady in Canada."

According to the report, Ontario has been ranked as the third worst polluter in North America behind North Carolina and Ohio. The state of Texas was ranked fourth. The top polluters were found to have the following emissions:

1. North Carolina - 700 facilities, 50,066,939 kg total air releases.
2. Ohio - 1443 facilities, 45,889,914 kg total air releases.
3. Ontario - 1014 facilities, 45,480,752 kg total air releases.
4. Texas - 1234 facilities, 42,656,276 kg total air releases.

The top three offenders in Canada are:

1. Ontario Power Generation, Nanticoke, ON (4th in North America)
2. Bowater Pulp and Paper, Thunder Bay, ON (35th in North America)
3. Bayer Inc., Sarnia, ON (40th in North America)

"Clearly this shows the need for strong leadership from the federal government," says Mitchell. "Whichever Party wins the election more stringent, mandatory, pollution prevention planning must be put in place."

Mitchell concludes, "It is critically important that the federal government and the provinces agree on Canada Wide Standards to reduce pollution. Provincial support must be obtained to make stricter standards legally enforceable. Finally pollution prevention planning must be part of the upcoming Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) review if we are to reduce air pollution and protect our health and environment."