

Commission for Environmental Cooperation

Meeting of the North American PRTR
Consultative Group

San Diego, CA
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Keith Chanon
Program Manager, PRTR

PRTR – What Is It?

- Database on *Pollutant Releases* of chemical substances to air, water, land, and *Transfers* to disposal, treatment, energy recovery, and recycling facilities compiled into a *Register* (annually)

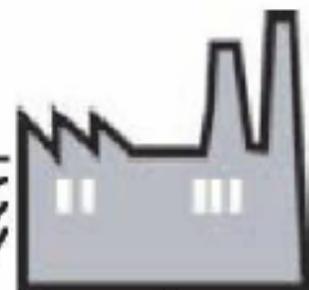


Toxic Release Data

On-site releases

are chemicals released to air, surface water, underground injection or land at the facility.

A facility reports each year on amounts of listed chemicals released on- and off-site and transferred off-site.



Air



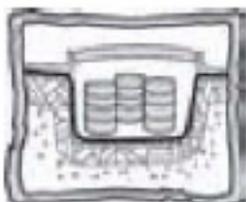
Surface water



Underground injection



Land

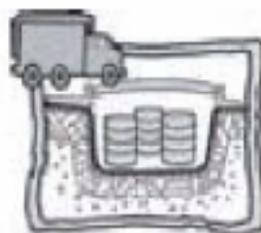


Transfers to disposal:

- Transfers of metals
- Transfers of others chemicals

Off-site releases

are all chemicals sent off-site for disposal, as well as metals sent to treatment, sewage and energy recovery.



Off-site transfers

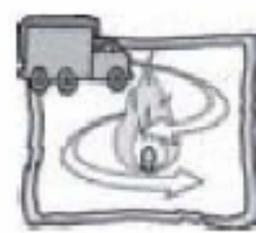
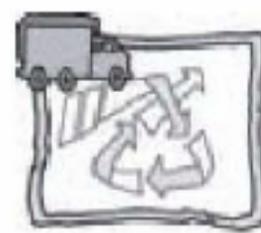
include chemicals sent for recycling as well as other transfers for further management.

Transfers to recycling:

- Recycling of metals
- Recycling of others chemicals

Other transfers for further management (excludes metals):

- Energy recovery
- Treatment
- Sewage



The Birth of PRTRs

- Tragic accident at Union Carbide chemical plant in Bhopal, India (1985)
- U.S. - Passage of 1986 Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act established the ***Toxics Release Inventory (TRI)*** (1987)
- Canada - ***National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI)*** established in 1993
- Mexico – ***Registro de Emisiones y Transferencia de Contaminantes (RETC)*** – First public reporting of data in 2006
- CEC – ***Taking Stock***



Benefits of PRTRs

Benefits:

- Community Right-To-Know
- Increase community awareness of chemical hazards
 - Children's health, vulnerable populations
- Improve corporate decision making
- Promote pollution prevention
- Improve government planning and regulatory programs
- Appropriately plan for emergency response needs

Limitations of PRTRs

PRTR data do **not** include:

- chemicals released deliberately such as pesticides
- all potentially harmful chemicals—just those on the lists of chemicals which must be reported;
- chemicals released from mobile sources such as cars and trucks;
- chemicals released from natural sources such as forest fires and erosion;
- chemicals released from small sources such as dry cleaners and gas stations;
- information on risks from chemicals released or transferred; or
- information on exposures to humans or the environment from chemicals used, released or transferred.

PRTR Project: Mission & Purpose

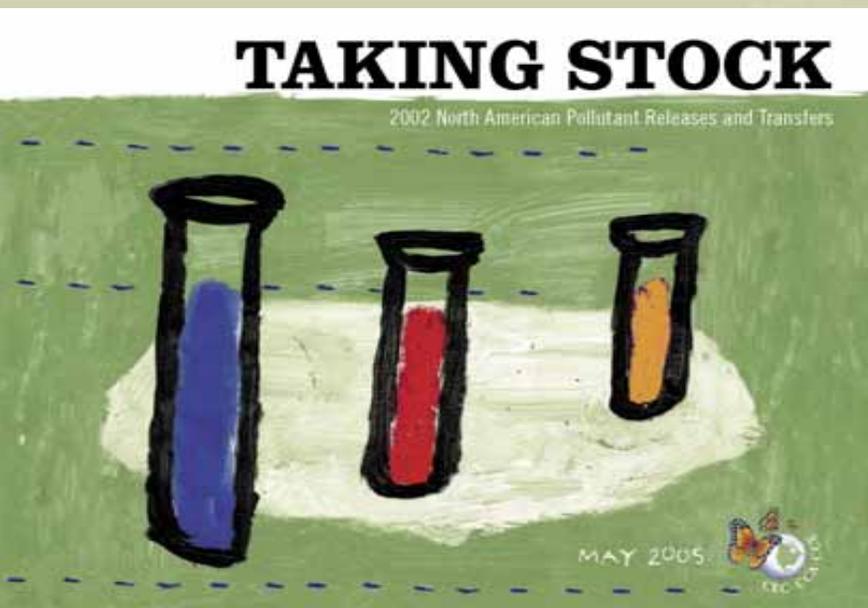
- Track and publish information on amounts, sources & management of toxics across N.A. (annual *Taking Stock* report)
- Increase the public's right to know about how chemicals are managed in their communities
- Stimulate reductions in pollution releases and transfers
- Enhance comparability among national PRTRs
- Strengthen capacity in Mexico to implement its national PRTR program

PRTR Consultative Group Meeting

- Establish partnerships across North America
- Share experiences relating to:
 - Reporting to PRTRs
 - Pollution prevention activities
 - Public outreach – use of PRTR data by tribal and indigenous groups
- Raise awareness among stakeholders
- Forum for decisions on *Taking Stock*

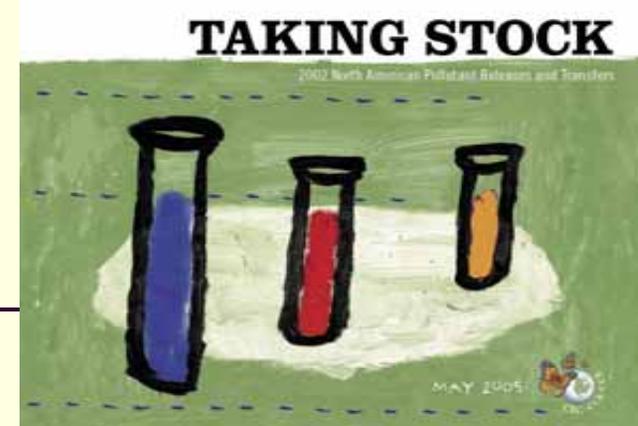


Taking Stock (“En Balance”)



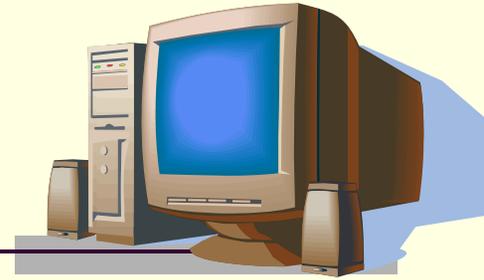
- Measures releases on a North American basis
- Draws upon data from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico
- Based upon a “matched” data set
- Analyses by chemical, industry, jurisdiction and release/transfer categories
- Raises awareness of key health and environmental issues
- Enables increased dialogue and collaboration across borders and industry

Taking Stock 2003: Noteworthy Features



- Canada & U.S. PRTR data (some CACs)
- 204 chemicals common to NPRI and TRI
- Over 20,000 reporting facilities
- Toxicity Equivalency Potentials (TEPs)
- Feature on the cement industry in N.A.
- Analysis of pollution prevention

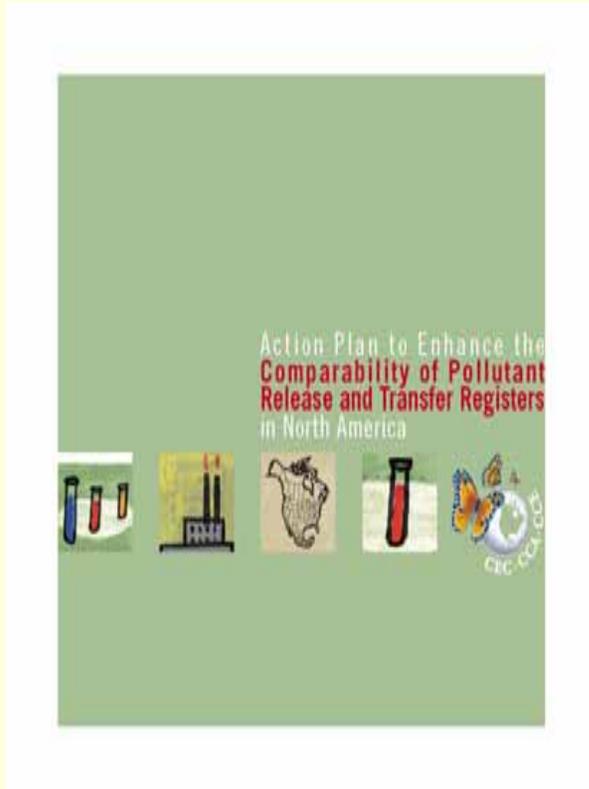
Taking Stock Online



Users can generate their own queries of the matched data sets used in *Taking Stock* by going to *TS Online* at:

www.cec.org/takingstock

Action Plan on PRTRs



- *Action Plan to Enhance Comparability Among PRTRs in North America* adopted by Council in 2002 (Res. 02-05)
- developed through collaboration among the national programs
- Updated version released September 2005

What is needed for PRTR data to be comparable across borders?

- Matching data requires:
 - Comparable chemical lists
 - Comparable reporting thresholds
 - Comparable industry sectors
 - Comparable industry classification codes
 - Comparable parameters for reporting releases and transfers
- Data must also be reported on a mandatory basis, and must be publicly accessible



2006 PRTR Project Highlights



- Publication of *Taking Stock 2003*
- Publication of *Toxic Chemicals and Children's Health in North America*
- Enhancement of *Taking Stock* report and website (<http://www.cec.org/takingstock>)
- Exploring potential of mapping PRTR data
- Collaboration with indigenous communities
- Public release of Mexico's RETC data



Future Program Priorities

- Comparability of PRTR data across N.A.
- Training and ongoing support for RETC implementation in Mexico
- Mentoring partnerships between U.S., Canadian and Mexican industries and NGOs
- *Taking Stock* reports and enhanced website, & increasing outreach opportunities
- Participation of tribal & indigenous peoples
- Engagement of the PRTR Consultative Group

