

Promoting Community Right to Know to Protect our and the Environment's Health

Canada's National Pollutant Release Inventory

Presentation by:
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Canadian
Environmental Law
Association
EQUITY. JUSTICE. HEALTH.

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Citizens' Network on
Waste Management



December 1-2, 1984

- 8,000 dead within 2 weeks
- 20,000 died prematurely
- 500,000 suffered lifelong respiratory problems

NPRI Characteristics

- Polluting facilities **required by law** (CEPA) to report:
 - Detailed data for each facility is available to public on the NPRI website
 - Data reported each year, which allows public to see trends over time
 - Requires reporting for each substance to be broken out by releases, disposal, transfers off-site

NPRI - Across the Country and Your Community

- Number of pollutants – over 320 pollutants
- Number of reporting facilities/industries (2021) – over 8,200
- Pollutants – carcinogens, reproductive and developmental substances, endocrine disrupting substances, Criteria air contaminants, CEPA toxic substances
- Types of facilities – Examples: factories that manufacture a variety of goods, mines, oil and gas operations, power plants and sewage treatment plants.
- Collects and publishes information about selected substances that may pose a risk to the environment and health



Source: Canva

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OFF-SITE TRANSFERS FOR TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL



Treatment prior to final disposal

- Physical
- Chemical
- Biological
- Incineration or thermal where energy is not recovered
- In a municipal sewage treatment plant



Disposal

- Landfill
- Land application
- Underground injection
- Storage off-site prior to final disposal
- Tailings and waste rock



ON-SITE RELEASES



Air

- Stack or point releases
- Storage or handling releases
- Fugitive releases
- Spills
- Road dust
- Other non-point releases



Surface waters

- Direct discharges
- Spills
- Leaks



Land

- Spills
- Leaks
- Other land releases that are not disposals



OFF-SITE TRANSFERS FOR RECYCLING



Recycling and energy recovery

- Energy
- Solvents
- Organic substances (not solvents)
- Metals and metal compounds
- Inorganic materials (not metals)
- Acids or bases
- Catalysts
- Pollution abatement residues
- Refining or reuse of used oil

ON-SITE DISPOSALS



- Landfill
- Land application
- Underground injection
- Tailings and waste rock

Community Right-to-Know

Citizens' groups and individuals use NPRI data to:

- Know about possible threats to their health and environment
- Look up data on a particular facility in their community
- Look up data for all facilities within their postal code
- Look up data on a particular pollutant



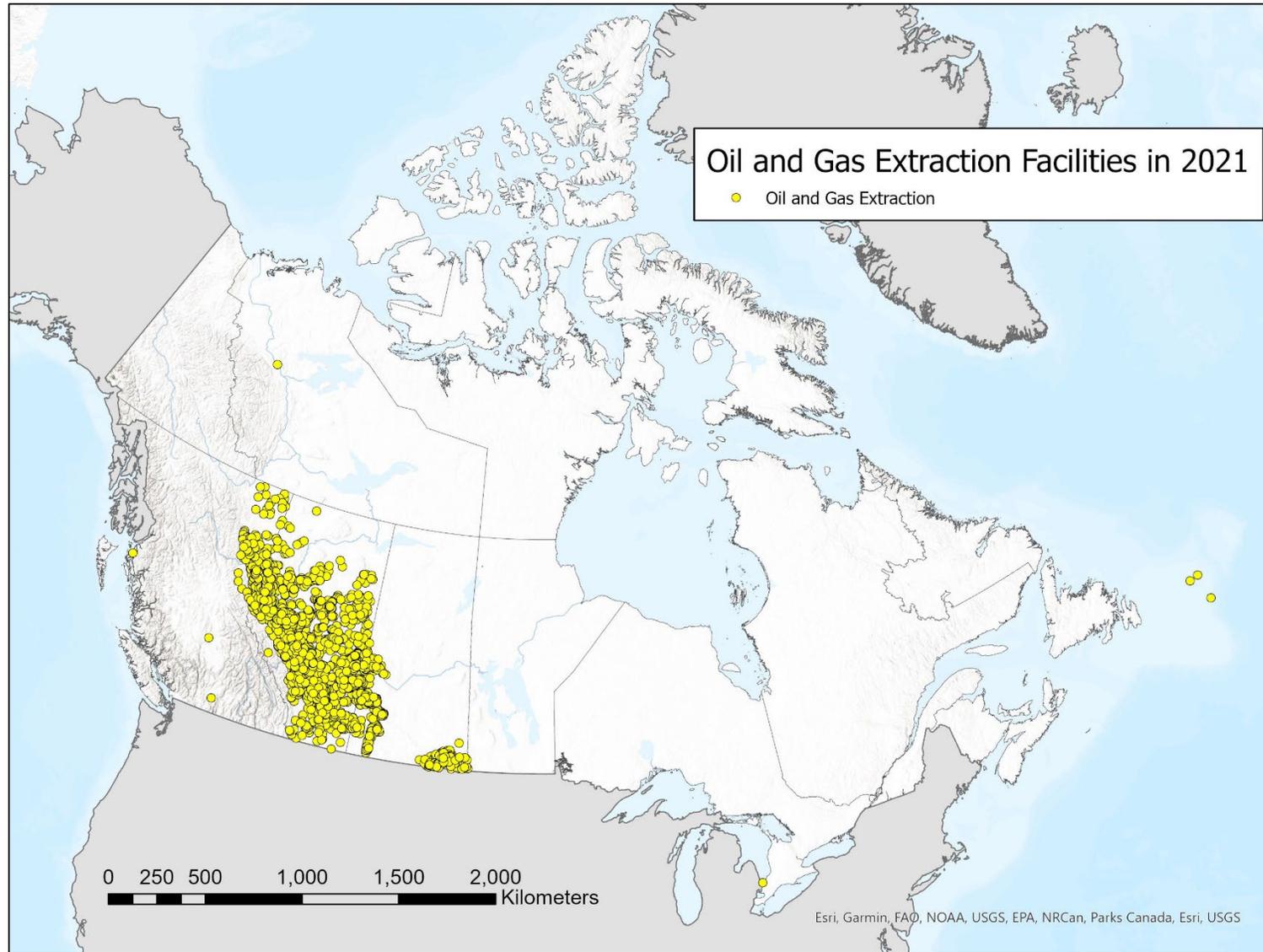
Source: Canva

EXAMPLE: Chemical Whack-a-mole

- NPRI data compiled by CELA shows that releases in Ontario to air of known or suspected carcinogens and substances listed in Schedule 1 of CEPA as toxic substances have increased from 2013 to 2019 by 28.8%.
- In Canada as a whole, on-site air emissions of arsenic decreased 67 per cent from 80,000 kilograms in 2006 to 26,000 kilograms in 2020. But on-site disposal and land releases of arsenic increased 400 per cent from 13 million kilograms in 2006 to 66 million kilograms in 2020.
- Reducing a substance in one environmental pathway (air) by millions of kilograms but allowing it to increase in another environmental pathway (land) by tens of millions of kilograms, amounts to playing “chemical whack-a-mole with some of the most dangerous substances on Earth.”

Fe de Leon & Joe Castrilli, Canadian Environmental Law Association

Oil and Gas Facilities - Canada 2021



But Fracking not covered by NPRI

- 2010 Petition by West Coast Environmental Law, Environmental Defence and the Association Québécoise de Lutte Contre la Pollution Atmosphérique to EC to require reporting through NPRI of fracking substances

Reasons Environment Canada gave for not including Fracking in NPRI - Nov 13, 2015

- NPRI reporting only required once production starts – purpose of fracking is to stimulate production of well so fracking is part of well completion phase
- Doesn't usually meet employee threshold for NPRI
- Levels of NPRI substances probably too low to meet NPRI requirements

Reasons Environment Canada gave for not including Fracking in NPRI (cont)

- Have to compare “value of information to the public versus the cost of obtaining it and making it available”
- FracFocus.ca provides info on substances used in Alb, BC, NB & NWT

Potential for having Fracking Exemption removed

- Environment Canada: “As new information becomes available, it will be considered to determine whether NPRI reporting on hydraulic fracturing would be appropriate” [Nov 13, 2015]
- ECCC has said that they will consider putting fracking on their workplan for 2025-2027.

Thank you

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