

To: National Pollutant Release Inventory, Environment and Climate Change Canada

C/O: jody.rosenberger@canada.ca; Lara.Mahmoud@ec.gc.ca

January 12, 2022

POLLUTION PREVENTION REPORTING UNDER NPRI

Pollution prevention reporting was addressed in the previous workplans of the National Pollutant Release Inventory Working Group (NPRI WG). Further consideration should be given to make continual improvement to the pollution prevention reporting under the NPRI. There are a few key areas where additional discussions should be considered for the next work plan of the NPRI WG including:

- Review the alignment of pollution prevention requirements under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and the NPRI
- Lessons and approaches on pollution prevention activities from jurisdictions including through the US Toxics Release Inventory, the state of Massachusetts and Ontario's Toxics Reduction Act.
- Consider enabling regulations to further support pollution prevention activities in NPRI.
- Communication and release of pollution prevention data to the public.

The NPRI WG initiated discussions on pollution prevention reporting in NPRI at its February 2018 work group meeting and followed this with a consultation in May 2019.⁷ As a result of the 2019 consultations conducted,⁸ "ECCC will be requiring that P2 activities be linked to specific substances where applicable when reporting to the NPRI, beginning with the 2021 reporting year. ECCC will also be removing the questions about whether the facility's P2 plan addresses substances, energy conservation or water conservation, and whether the plan was updated during the calendar year...." This decision will make modest improvement to the current status of reporting pollution prevention activities under the NPRI. However, it does not represent a substantive change to the program.

Substantial additional changes are needed to NPRI to ensure the program effectively supports pollution prevention and reduction of toxic substances. NPRI defines as "the use of processes, practices, materials, products, substances or energy that avoid or minimize the creation of pollutants and waste, and reduce the overall risk to the environment or human health." To achieve the full scope of pollution prevention in NPRI, the NPRI will need to consider elements

⁷ Environment and Climate Change Canada. May 2019. Changes to requirements for reporting pollution prevention information to the National Pollutant Release Inventory (Consultation Document).

⁸ The *Proposed Changes to National Pollutant Release Inventory Reporting Requirements for 2020-2021 Summary of Stakeholder Comments and Environment and Climate Change Canada's Response* (September 2020). See: https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2020/eccc/En84-155-2020-eng.pdf

not yet required within the scope of the NPRI. For example, at its June 2019 meeting of the NPRI WG, an US EPA staff member presented on the Toxics Release Inventory including on pollution prevention reporting under the TRI. This presentation provided substantial information that should be explored by NPRI. Our meeting report of the June 2019 meeting, noted:

The TRI promotes release prevention and reduction activities through resources and analytical activities. The TRI uses an analytical approach to identify mention of cost savings, sustained reductions, and other positive topics in the voluntary information reported by facilities. This approach is also used to identify common barriers to P2 activities cited by facilities. The TRI also offers a variety of P2 web resources that highlight various methods to evaluate the impact of source reduction and showcase the value of the inventory. These resources help facilities report P2 activities and help users' access and analyze TRI data.

*Collectively, these activities incentivize reporting of voluntary P2 information to the TRI. Shifting focus from sectors that pollute heavily, the TRI shares good news stories and highlights facilities that have made environmental improvements through the Spotlight Series. An analysis of the data shows a substantial increase in P2 narrative submissions, which in turn make the TRI a stronger resource for helping to evaluate and improve corporate environmental performance. (**National Pollutant Release Inventory Multi-Stakeholder Work Group Meeting: June 11 & 12, 2019, Report prepared for Environment and Climate Change Canada, page 28**)*

The NPRI WG workplan should further explore how NPRI can be used to support additional reduction strategies. For example, emphasis for reporting should be placed on the elimination and reduction activities on toxic substances and how these goals were achieved by facilities. Similarly, ensuring activities reported under NPRI also focus on prevention at source or focus on the use of chemicals by facilities to demonstrate the full cycle of the use and release of pollutants by facilities. A focus on these activities will demonstrate how effective pollution prevention activities have been at the facility level.

In addition, NPRI should expand to see how other jurisdictions including the state of Massachusetts successfully achieved significant reduction of toxics and waste in the state through pollution prevention activities. Similarly, an investigation of Ontario's Toxics Reduction Act and Program should be reviewed as it included mandatory requirements for preparing toxics reduction plans for toxic substances. Specifically, NPRI should be considering changes to the reporting mechanism under NPRI and to the website on how the information is presented on pollution prevention activities.

Submitted by the NGO members of the NPRI Multi-Stakeholder Working Group