



NEWS RELEASE

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

410 Willoughby Ave., Suite 303,

Post Office Box 111800

Juneau, AK 99811-1800

Phone: (907) 465-5009 Fax: (907) 465-5070

Contact: Leslie Pearson (907) 269-7543

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EPA issues inventory of chemical management, disposal, release

Report reflects increase in mining activity in Alaska

March 22, 2007—Today the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued its annual “Toxics Release Inventory” (TRI) for 2005. The TRI is a compilation of the total reported weight of certain chemical substances that are emitted or discharged in accordance with permits, managed in regulated disposal units, or released to the environment accidentally. Once again, Alaska had more of these chemical substances reported by industry than any other state in the nation due primarily to the permitted disposal of mine waste rock and tailings.

“It is important to make this information available to Alaskans. The public wants to know what wastes are being generated, and managed or discharged, in our state. It is also important to understand that the bulk of the reported wastes are being managed in permitted, engineered facilities,” said Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Larry Hartig. “We have prepared a guide to explain the TRI process and results for Alaska. We hope anyone interested in the TRI will find the guide helpful.” The guide is available online at www.dec.state.ak.us.

More than 90% of the total pounds reported in 2005 were associated with waste rock removed in mining for the more valuable ore. Waste rock contains metals, like lead, in concentrations that are too low to process economically, but that could cause health or environmental damage if released into the environment. Because of the potential for adverse effects, handling and disposal of waste rock are subject to strict regulation in Alaska. It is the large volume of low concentration metals in waste rock that dominates the TRI results for Alaska.

In addition to mining operations, other industrial classifications that must report to EPA include chemical manufacturers, electric utilities, federal facilities such as military bases, food processors, oil refineries, solvent recovery services, commercial hazardous waste treatment operators, and petroleum bulk terminals. The TRI report and the DEC guide include information on both permitted disposal of substances such as waste rock, along with accidental spills from these types of facilities. Results are tabulated by industry type as well as geographic region.

-###-