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## **EPA Issues Toxics Release Inventory analysis for 2009 DEC TRI guide for Alaska available online**

(Juneau, Alaska) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued its annual national analysis of the 2009 "Toxics Release Inventory" (TRI). The inventory compiles 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.

"It is important to provide this information to Alaskans. The public wants to know what wastes are being generated or discharged in our state. It is also important to understand that in Alaska most of the reported wastes contained in this inventory and characterized as 'released' are being managed in permitted, engineered facilities," said Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Larry Hartig.

In 2009, as in years past, Alaska had more of these chemical substances reported by industry than any other state in the nation. Alaska's ranking is due primarily to the permitted disposal of mine waste rock and tailings.

Total TRI releases for mining facilities, made up primarily of waste rock and tailings, account for more than 99% of the total pounds reported for all facilities in 2009. Waste rock contains metals, such as lead, in concentrations that are too low to process economically, but could cause health or environmental damage if released in an uncontrolled manner on land, in water or air. Handling and disposal of waste rock is subject to strict regulation in Alaska because of the potential for adverse effects.

The large releases reported annually by metal mines in Alaska, including those for 2009, are due to the reporting of minerals listed as TRI chemicals – primarily zinc and lead – remaining in waste rock. In general, the more rock a mine processes, the more zinc and lead-containing waste is reported. As in previous years, 2009 data indicate that metals in waste rock from four major mining facilities account for, by weight, the largest TRI releases in Alaska. Electric utilities, military bases, and refineries account for secondary releases of TRI chemicals. DEC produces an annual guide to put TRI data into perspective for Alaskans: [www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/tri/tri.htm](http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/tri/tri.htm)

"TRI data is a good indicator of the amount of chemicals released, but it does not measure exposure, so it is an indicator of potential hazard rather than risk," according to Brook

Madrone, EPA Region 10 TRI program manager. “The data is used as a starting point for evaluating exposure and risk in screening tools such as the Risk Screening Environmental Indicator found at: <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/rsei/>. The tool can assist users to better understand hazard, relative risk, and potential exposures.” For questions about the TRI data, call Brook at (206) 553-4016.