



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**EPA Issues Toxics Release Inventory for 2007; Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation TRI guide for Alaska online**

Today the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued its “Toxics Release Inventory” (TRI) for 2007. The annual 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 make this information available to Alaskans. The public wants to know what wastes are being generated or discharged in our state. It is also important to understand that most of the reported wastes are being managed in permitted, engineered facilities,” said Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) Commissioner Larry Hartig.

In 2007, 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.

Mine waste rock and tailings account for 99% of the total pounds reported in 2007. 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 2007, 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.

"TRI data reflect only the amounts of the chemicals that have been disposed, released, or otherwise managed, not whether or to what degree the public has been exposed," said Brook Madrone, TRI program coordinator for EPA's Region 10. "TRI data, together with other information, can serve as a starting point for evaluating exposures and risks. TRI data used in screening tools, such as the Risk Screening Environmental Indicator found at: <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/rsei/>, which can provide users with additional understanding of relative risk and potential exposures."

DEC also produces an annual guide to put TRI data into perspective for Alaskans. It is available at [www.dec.state.ak.us](http://www.dec.state.ak.us).

To read EPA's press release on TRI data for calendar year 2007, please go to <http://www.epa.gov/newsroom/>.