

News Release

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Texas Chemical Council Members Dump: * 187 Million Pounds of Toxins in Texas * Up to \$10 Million into State Politics

Gov. Bush #1 Recipient of Texas Toxic Cash

Austin, TX: A new study finds that members of the Texas Chemical Council (TCC) trade group released 187 million pounds of toxic wastes into Texas' environment in 1996, according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) data. TCC members also released more than \$2 million in political contributions in the last two election cycles and spent up to \$8 million on lobbyists in 1999, according to *Toxic Exposure: How Texas Chemical Council Members Pollute State Politics and the Environment*. The study was produced by Texans for Public Justice and the U.S. PIRG Education Fund.

"Pollution and political clout are closely linked in Texas," said Craig McDonald, director of Texans for Public Justice. "The TCC is a prime example of how a special-interest group harnesses big money in order to dump on average Texas citizens. Cleaning up state politics is the first step towards cleaning up the air we breathe and water we drink."

Toxic Exposure reveals the amount of toxins and certain carcinogens released into the ground, air and water by companies that belong to the TCC. It also reports on the political contributions and lobby expenditures of this trade association and its member companies. The report exposes the political agenda behind these political expenditures. Not surprisingly, that agenda seeks to minimize environmental protections in Texas.

Among the findings of *Toxic Exposure*:

- Members of the TCC spewed 187 million pounds, or 74 percent, of all EPA-tracked toxic chemical emissions released in Texas in 1996. TCC emissions alone exceeded the total toxic emissions of every other state. TCC members account for 98 percent of Texas' toxic water pollution, 90 percent of its toxic underground injections and 67 percent of its toxic air pollution.
- Texas led the nation in the release of known and suspected carcinogens tracked by the EPA. TCC members released more than 13 million pounds of the top-10 known

or suspected carcinogens. Huntsman Corporation's Port Arthur plant is the nation's No. 1 source of benzene emissions, a potent carcinogen. Lyondell's Channelview plant is the nation's No. 1 polluter of 1,3-Butadiene.

- DuPont led TCC members in total toxic pollution, releasing more than 40 million pounds of toxins into the water, land and air. BASF Corporation ranked second in overall pollution, releasing 17 million pounds of toxins, followed by Hoechst Celanese, Huntsman Corporation, British Petroleum, Mobil Corporation and Sterling Chemicals, each of which released more than 10 million pounds of toxins.
- Political Action Committees (PACs) tied to the TCC and its members spent \$2.2 million in the 1996 and 1998 election cycles in Texas. During this period, these PACs contributed more than \$1 million to current members of the legislature and statewide office holders.
- Governor Bush received the most TCC-affiliated PAC money (\$115,871) followed by Attorney General John Cornyn (\$77,350). Senate Natural Resources Committee Chairman Buster Brown took more TCC-affiliated PAC money (\$24,900) than any other member of the three environmental committees that handle most of the TCC's priority agenda.
- TCC members hired 222 lobbyists in 1999 alone, paying them up to \$8.7 million. Leading polluter DuPont led the lobbying cavalcade by hiring 21 lobbyists at a cost of up to \$1.2 million.

"It is no coincidence that Texas has some of the weakest campaign finance laws and the worst toxic pollution in the country," said Derek Cressman, spokesperson for U.S. PIRG. "With no limits on the political money polluters can spend, there is little political will to place limits on the toxins that they can discharge."

Toxic release data used in the report came from the EPA's Toxic Release Inventory. Campaign contribution and lobbying expenditure data came from reports filed with the Texas Ethics Commission.

Copies of the report are available through Texans for Public Justice, <http://www.tpj.org>, or The U.S. PIRG Education Fund, <http://www.pirg.org>.

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