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**Over 230 Million Pounds of Toxics Discharged into American Waterways**

Industrial facilities dumped 2,847,886 pounds of toxic chemicals into Oregon's waterways, according to a report released today by Environment Oregon: *Wasting Our Waterways: Industrial Toxic Pollution and the Unfulfilled Promise of the Clean Water Act*. The report also finds that toxic chemicals were discharged in 1,900 waterways across all 50 states. The total amount of toxic chemicals released by industrial facilities is based on the 2007 federal Toxic Release Inventory from the EPA database, made available in May 2009

"While nearly half of the rivers and lakes in the U.S. are considered too polluted for safe fishing or swimming, our report shows that polluters continue to use our waterways as dumping grounds for their toxic chemicals," said Alex Silva, Preservation Associate with Environment Oregon.

"Our waterways are a source of sport and recreation. We need them protected, not polluted," said Karl Mueller of Trout Unlimited.

The Environment Oregon report documents and analyzes the dangerous levels of pollutants discharged in to America's waters by compiling toxic chemical releases reported to the U.S. EPA's Toxics Release Inventory for 2007, the most recent data available.

Major findings of the report include:

- TDY Industries, formerly known as Teledyne *Wah Chang*, released 915,470 pounds of toxic chemical waste into the Willamette River in Oregon. The TDY facility was the largest reported polluter of toxic chemicals in Oregon in 2007. The Willamette River is ranked 30<sup>th</sup> in the nation for total toxic discharges, with 1,721,272 pounds discharged in 2007.
- Nationally, 232 million pounds of toxic chemicals were released to American waterways during 2007 by industrial facilities.
- Industrial facilities discharged approximately 4,690 pounds of chemicals linked to cancer into the Willamette River in Oregon.

With facilities dumping so much pollution, no one should be surprised that nearly half of our waterways are unsafe for swimming and fishing. But we should be outraged.

Environment Oregon's report summarizes the discharge of cancer-causing chemicals, chemicals that persist in the environment, and chemicals with the potential to cause reproductive problems ranging from birth defects to reduced fertility. Among the toxic chemicals discharged by facilities are lead, mercury, and dioxin. When dumped into waterways, these toxic chemicals contaminate drinking water and are absorbed by the fish that people eventually eat. Exposure to these chemicals is linked to cancer, developmental disorders, and reproductive disorders. In 2007, manufacturing facilities discharged approximately 1.5 million pounds of cancer-causing chemicals into American waters.

"There are common-sense steps that should be taken to turn the tide against toxic pollution of our waters," added Alex Silva. "We need clean water now, and we need the federal government to act to protect our health and our environment."

In order to curb the toxic pollution threatening the Willamette River, Environment Oregon recommends the following:

1. **Pollution Prevention:** Industrial facilities should reduce their toxic discharges in to waterways by switching from hazardous chemicals to safer alternatives.
2. **Tough permitting and enforcement:** EPA and state agencies should issue permits with tough, numeric limits for each type of toxic pollution discharged, ratchet down those limits over time, and enforce those limits with credible penalties, not just warning letters.
3. **Protect all waters:** The federal government should adopt policies to clarify that the Clean Water Act applies to all of our waterways. This includes the thousands of headwaters and small streams for which jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act has been called into question, as a result of recent court decisions.

"We urge Congress and the President to listen to the public's demands for clean water. They should act to protect *all* of our lakes, rivers and streams from toxic pollution," concluded Alex Silva.

*Environment Oregon is a statewide, citizen-based environmental advocacy organization that works to protect clean air, clean water, and open spaces*