

For Immediate Release: April 4, 2012

Contact: Megan Fitzpatrick, Environment New Jersey, 609-392-5151 ext. 307 / 609-647-1526
Tracy Carluccio, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, 215-692-2329

8.5 Million Pounds of Toxic Chemicals Dumped into New Jersey's Waterways

Delaware River tops list of most polluted in the nation

Trenton, NJ – Industrial facilities dumped 8.5 million pounds of toxic chemicals into New Jersey's waterways, making New Jersey's waterways the 12th worst in the nation, according to a new report released today by Environment New Jersey. *Wasting Our Waterways: Industrial Toxic Pollution and the Unfulfilled Promise of the Clean Water Act* also reports that 226 million pounds of toxic chemicals were discharged into 1,400 waterways across the country.

"New Jersey's waterways continue to be open for business for the state's biggest polluters.. Polluters dump 8.5 million pounds of toxic chemicals into New Jersey's lakes, rivers and streams every year," said **Megan Fitzpatrick, clean water associate with Environment New Jersey**. "We must turn the tide of toxic pollution by restoring Clean Water Act protections to our waterways."

The Environment New Jersey report documents and analyzes the dangerous levels of pollutants discharged to America's waters by compiling toxic chemical releases reported to the U.S. EPA's Toxics Release Inventory for 2010, the most recent data available.

Major findings of the report include:

- The Delaware River is ranked 5th in the nation for highest amount of total toxic discharges, with 6.7 million pounds discharged in 2010.
- DuPont Chambers Works was the biggest polluter in New Jersey, dumping 5.4 million pounds of toxic pollution into the Delaware River. Furthermore, DuPont was the 4th biggest polluter in the country.
- ConocoPhillips – Bayway Refinery was the 18th biggest polluter in the country, dumping over 2.4 million pounds of toxic pollution into the Morses Creek, which was ranked 19th in the nation for highest amount of total toxic discharges.

"The Delaware River goes from a Wild and Scenic River with exceptional water quality upstream to the fifth worst in the nation in terms of toxic discharges as it flows downstream. The lion's share of the toxic pollution comes from DuPont in Salem County where toxics are loaded into the River with abandon. The problem is that government agencies allow these discharges to continue by issuing permits to pollute, a perverse interpretation of the Clean Water Act. This has to stop if we want to provide a healthy, economically sound Delaware River for everyone, including the estuary and Bay that are so degraded by this overload of toxics," said **Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network**.

Environment New Jersey's report summarizes discharges 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 arsenic, mercury, and benzene. Exposure to these chemicals is linked to cancer, developmental disorders and reproductive disorders.

“Information is a powerful tool, and reports like this are the reason I authored the law establishing the federal toxic emissions right-to-know program. Communities need to know what’s polluting their environment in order to fight for stronger water quality protections and better clean-ups,” **said U.S. Senator Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ), Chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Superfund, Toxics and Environmental Health.**

“There are common-sense steps that we can take to turn the tide against toxic pollution of our waters,” **added Fitzpatrick.**

In order to curb the toxic pollution threatening the Delaware River and other state waterways, Environment New Jersey recommends the following:

1. **Pollution Prevention:** Industrial facilities should reduce their toxic discharges to waterways by switching from hazardous chemicals to safer alternatives.
2. **Protect all waters:** The Obama administration should finalize guidelines and conduct a rulemaking to clarify that the Clean Water Act applies to all of our waterways - including the 4,087 miles of streams in New Jersey and over 4.2 million New Jerseyans’ drinking water for which jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act has been called into question as a result of two polluter-driven Supreme Court decisions in the last decade.
3. **Tough permitting and enforcement:** EPA and NJDEP 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.

“The health of our rivers is directly tied to human health. This report shows we need to do a better job using the Clean Water Act to protect our waterways from toxic discharges,” **said Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ).**

“This report should serve as a call to action. The six million people who live along the Delaware River depend upon the cleanliness of its waters, yet as this report points out, polluters continue to dump millions of pounds of toxic chemicals into the river each year—in addition to millions of other pounds of pollutants dumped statewide. I join Environment New Jersey in urging President Obama to finalize the proposed Clean Water guidelines and soon undertake a rulemaking process that will protect the waters that New Jerseyans depend on,” **said Representative Rush Holt (D-12).**

“The bottom line is that New Jersey’s waterways shouldn’t be a dumping ground. This report is a reminder that we need the Clean Water Act to be strengthened to help reduce this pollution. While the EPA is poised for action, we need tougher pollution standards at the state level – not rollbacks – by the Christie administration,” **said Fitzpatrick.**

###