

Assignment #4

Should the EPA Raise the Reporting Limit for its Toxics Release Inventory?

Background:

The United States' Environmental Protection Agency's Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) currently requires industrial facilities to report yearly any release of 500 pounds or more of 650 different chemicals. The Bush administration has proposed some changes to the current policy; only releases of 5,000 pounds or more would have to be reported and that facilities would have to report only every other year. Many people fear that the proposed changes in EPA policy would result in serious harm to human and environmental health, by limiting the public's ability to know what chemicals are being released. The EPA will announce its decision on whether to adopt the proposed change later this year. What do you think?

Assignment:

This paper will take the form of a thoughtful, detailed, and well-supported letter to Stephen L. Johnson, Administrator of the EPA, in which you explain why you support or oppose the proposed changes to the TRI. (See attached page for correct letter format. Note that although letters are typically single-spaced, I want you to double-space yours so that I have sufficient room to write comments).

Stephen L. Johnson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Before you begin writing, consider how this issue relates to some of the other readings and topics we have focused on this semester. For instance, what would Rachel Carson say? How might the proposed change affect the groups that Timothy Maher, Stella Capek, and Robert Bullard argue are most negatively impacted by toxic waste and pollution? What would Hardin expect to see happen if the EPA relaxed its restrictions on reporting chemical releases? How might the proposed new standard's impact people's access to the American Dream? In order to more fully understand the issue, I suggest you do a bit of your own research. (What is the EPA? What does it do? Who is likely to support the changes, and why?)

Specifics of the paper:

- Your introduction should include useful background information about how the Toxic Release Index currently works, and about Bush administration's proposed changes.
- Your thesis should clearly express your **opinion** about whether you support the proposed changes or not, and perhaps why.
- The body of your essay should provide sufficient evidence from the various readings and explanation of your own to support your thesis.
- Body paragraphs should generally develop a single point or idea related to the thesis and should begin with topic sentences that make that point clear to your reader.
- Direct quotations should be introduced, punctuated and cited correctly.
- As with your previous paper, you will include a Works Cited list with your final draft.
- Be sure that you use the correct MLA format for titles, headings, page numbers, etc.

Final draft due: *Monday, May 8*