



Our Children's Earth Foundation | 100 First Street, Suite 100-367, San Francisco, CA 94105

NEWS RELEASE

Date: May 31, 2004

Contact: Tiffany Schauer,
Our Children's Earth (415) 948-7409
Frederic Evenson, Ecological Rights Foundation
(707) 268-8900 ext. 2
Michael Graf,
Attorney for Our Children's Earth and Ecological Rights Foundation
(510) 525-7222

Environmental Groups Sue U.S. EPA for Failing to Review & Revise Water Standards

San Francisco, California — Two environmental groups sued the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for failing to update water pollution standards. Our Children's Earth and Ecological Rights Foundation sued EPA for its failure to update these standards which means many industries are not required to reduce their water pollutant discharges to match the capabilities of current control technologies.

EPA is required under the Clean Water Act (CWA) every year to review CWA regulations which establish a national minimum floor of pollution control based on currently available technology. These "effluent guidelines" regulations set uniform standards for 55 categories of industry that discharge water pollutants, and Congress required EPA to review these effluent guidelines annually to ensure that they are kept up-to-date with changes in available treatment technologies. EPA failed to complete the required review of effluent guidelines for a single category of industry last year, however, and the Bush Administration is proposing to review only two of the 55 categories of industry regulated by effluent guidelines in 2004.

"At this rate it will take the EPA 55 years to accomplish something that Congress told them to do every year," said Tiffany Schauer, Executive Director of Our Children's Earth. "This just doesn't make any sense to me. It's amazing that the government refuses to make these industries add today's readily available technology to reduce the amount of pollution industry is introducing into waters in which people swim and fish."

The CWA further requires EPA every year to identify new categories of industry that should be added to effluent guidelines regulations. The Bush Administration, continuing its lax enforcement of the environmental laws, has failed to identify a single new category of industry to regulate, even though comments from environmental groups formally submitted to EPA

identified at least 13 potential new categories and EPA internal documents have also acknowledged that there are many such potential new categories that are currently unregulated.

“ EPA’s own documents acknowledge that industry facilities such as petroleum bulk stations and terminals and chemical formulation plants are not currently regulated by effluent guidelines, yet the Bush Administration has deliberately avoided formally listing these industries under the CWA. Such listing would trigger a mandatory three year deadline for regulating these industries, which the current administration is bending over backwards to avoid. This is just another example of the Bush Administration’s rewarding corporate polluters,” said Fred Evenson, of Ecological Rights Foundation.

###