

POSITION STATEMENT

COMMUNITY RIGHT-TO-KNOW

Community members have a right to know about toxic pollutants in their workplaces and neighbourhoods. Access to information on the transport, use, storage, and release of toxic chemicals is critical to both understanding and preventing health and environmental risks for all who live and work in Toronto.

In 2004, Ontario regulations allowed over 7000 tonnes of hazardous chemicals to be released into Toronto's air, land and water. These chemicals are toxic to humans, with many known or suspected to cause cancer, damage reproductive, respiratory and neurological systems, and disrupt hormone balance. We are all at risk from pollution, however our children are most vulnerable. The way they eat, breathe and play means that, pound for pound, they take in more toxic chemicals than adults. Their growing bodies and minds are more susceptible to the damage pollution can cause.

Most polluters are not legally required to disclose the toxic chemicals they use, store or produce. Research shows that 75% of industry emissions are unreported and less than 3% of the facilities that use or release toxic chemicals disclose their emissions to the public. Reported information that is available is often inconsistent, incomplete and difficult to access.

Community Right-to-Know (CRTK) provides detailed information on sources of pollution in our communities. Acting on this information, right-to-know bylaws in other jurisdictions have helped citizens and workers world-wide reduce the level of pollutants in their communities and workplaces.

For these reasons we support a Community Right-to-Know bylaw in Toronto that discloses the transport, use, storage, release, and health effects of toxic chemicals in our communities.