



# MEDIA ADVISORY

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## Inventory provides snapshot of regional air pollution

**Ann Arbor, Mich.** — An updated Great Lakes Regional Air Toxic Emissions Inventory – a key resource for environmental management in the binational region – has been released by the Great Lakes Commission.

The largest multi-jurisdictional effort of its kind in North America, the updated inventory compiles data collected by the eight Great Lakes states and the Province of Ontario. Enhancing the previously released 1999 data, this latest release includes mobile source emissions for the region, as well as data on point and area source emissions that were released in December.

“This inventory is an outstanding example of binational cooperation in managing a shared resource,” said Mike Donahue, president/CEO of the Great Lakes Commission. “It lays the foundation for air emissions research and provides information our air management partners can use to improve air quality in the Great Lakes basin. It also helps us increase the public’s awareness of what they can do to reduce the impact that automobiles and other mobile sources have on air quality.”

Supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the inventory compiles data on 197 different pollutants, listing them by type, quantity and source. This newest inventory pays special attention to mercury emissions, providing an overview of regional mercury levels, identifying information gaps and suggesting areas where the inventory could be improved.

Coal was identified as the source of the majority of 1999 mercury emissions in the eight Great Lakes states and Ontario. Other major sources were heavy duty diesel vehicles, refuse systems, chloride alkali manufacturing facilities and hospitals. Reported regional mercury emissions totaled 62,000 lbs.

The inventory provides a detailed picture of pollutants and sources, suggesting useful approaches to improving air quality. Among all pollutants, toluene was estimated to have the highest emissions at nearly 810 million lbs. Light duty gasoline vehicles were found to be the most significant sources of three of the five top non-metal compounds (toluene, xylenes and benzene). Electric, gas and sanitary sources were found responsible for almost 90 percent of hydrochloric acid emissions. More than three-quarters of the emissions of 1,1,1-trichloroethane were from degreasing equipment.

The inventory helps to identify inconsistencies in data collection and analysis across jurisdictions, and encourages the establishment of standard procedures and protocols. It includes the development of an automated

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### Great Lakes Commission

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emission estimation and inventory system, and demonstrates the value of the Internet as a means of exchanging environmental data.

One of the main challenges in compiling the inventory was maintaining consistency from one jurisdiction to the next, given differences in data breadth, quality and availability. As a result, the inventory should not be used to compare emissions from one state or province to another but rather to demonstrate the potential of a comprehensive inventory as a decision support tool.

The project team is now compiling emission sources for the year 2001. The team is also designing a searchable Internet database, due for release next year.

The inventory is available online at [www.glc.org/air/inventory/1999](http://www.glc.org/air/inventory/1999) or in print form by contacting the Great Lakes Commission.

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*The Great Lakes Commission, chaired by Samuel W. Speck (Ohio), is a nonpartisan, binational compact agency created by state and U.S. federal law and dedicated to promoting a strong economy, healthy environment and high quality of life for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region and its residents. The Commission consists of state legislators, agency officials and governors' appointees from its eight member states. Associate membership for Ontario and Québec was established through the signing of a "Declaration of Partnership." The Commission maintains a formal Observer program involving U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, tribal authorities, binational agencies and other regional interests. The Commission offices are located in Ann Arbor, Michigan.*