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Contact Michael Ash mash@econs.umass.edu or Kim Weinstein kweinstein@peri.umass.edu / 703-229-2146 or visit PERI's Corporate Toxics Information Project on the web at <http://toxic100.org>.

PERI Names Top Climate, Air, and Water Polluters; Environmental Justice Indicators Track Unequal Risk for Poor and Minorities

AMHERST, MA, December 15, 2021/August 30, 2022* - Researchers at the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst published new editions of the [Greenhouse 100](#) Index, ranking U.S. companies by their emissions responsible for global climate change according to the U.S. EPA Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program, and the [Toxic 100 Air](#) and [Toxic 100 Water](#) Indexes, ranking U.S. industrial polluters using the U.S. EPA Toxics Release Inventory. The PERI Indexes include Environmental Justice indicators to assess impacts on low-income people and minorities.

The Greenhouse 100 Index ranks companies by 2019 direct emissions from large sources. The top three companies are Vistra Energy, Duke Energy, and Southern Company, continuing a three-year period in which these were in the top three. They each released more than 85 million metric tons of CO₂-equivalent emissions. Together these three companies released 4 percent of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions from all sources including non-energy sources.

Rounding out the top ten in the Greenhouse 100 are Berkshire Hathaway, American Electric Power, Xcel Energy, Energy Capital Partners, NextEra Energy, and Exxon Mobil, with the U.S. government ranking 6th. The top company whose direct emissions are not dominated by electric power plants is Exxon Mobil at rank 10. Among the top ten, Energy Capital Partners has the highest weighted share of minorities living within 10 miles of its facilities with likely disproportionate exposure to co-pollutants of combustion.

The Toxic 100 Air Polluters Index reports that the top ten 2019 companies in terms of total potential chronic human health risk are Boeing, LyondellBasell, Huntsman, Linde, BASF, Dow Inc., Celanese, Baker Hughes, Eastman Chemical, and Ecolab. One of these companies is in the top ten almost entirely because of chromium from one facility; one of them due to ethylene oxide from one facility. The Toxic 100 Air Index covers publicly-traded as well as privately-held companies, such as Koch Industries at rank 36, that appear on Forbes, Fortune, or S&P lists. The index includes Environmental Justice indicators: for example, while minorities make up just under 40 percent of the U.S. population they bear 68 percent of the air-toxics risk from facilities owned by LyondellBasell.

The Toxic 100 Water Polluters Index ranks the pounds of toxics released into surface water or sent to water-treatment systems, adjusted for chemical toxicity. Northrop Grumman, Dow Inc., LyondellBasell, Celanese, and Canopus International top the Toxic 100 Water Index for 2019. The Toxic 100 Water list now includes Environmental Justice indicators for the first time: for example, minorities bear 48% of the toxic hazard from water releases and transfers to water treatment facilities by Dow Inc.

In addition to the top-100 lists, a search facility provides information on all companies reporting releases to the Toxics Release Inventory or the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program.

“The Toxic 100 and Greenhouse 100 inform consumers, shareholders, regulators, lawmakers, and communities which large corporations release toxic and climate-altering pollutants into our environment,” said Professor Michael Ash, co-director of PERI's Corporate Toxics Information Project. “We assess not just how many pounds of pollutants are released, but which are the most toxic and who is exposed. People have a right to know about toxic hazards to which they are exposed. Legislators need to understand the effects of pollution on their constituents.”

“In making this information available, we are building on the achievements of the right-to-know movement,” notes Ash. “Our goal is to engender public participation in environmental decision-making, and to help residents translate the right to know into the right to clean air, clean water, and a livable planet.”

*Toxic 100 Air Polluters Index was updated on August 30, 2022. Assa Abloy, previously ranked at number 8 among the Toxic 100 Air, submitted data to the U.S. E.P.A. revising its 2019 TRI reporting. Based on the revision, Assa Abloy is ranked 98th on the Toxic 100 Air. The next edition of the Toxic 100 will reflect the most current information from the E.P.A.