

\$2.9 million from polluters to 'call the shots' at Ohio EPA

For immediate release

April 16, 2003

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COLUMBUS -- An industry advisory committee to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) and the companies and associations they represent contributed over \$2.9 million from 1999-2002 to statewide and legislative candidates and political party committees, according to a study released today by Ohio Citizen Action. The Industry/Ohio EPA Permit Processing Efficiency Committee and those interests represented on the committee contributed \$2,517,852 to statewide and legislative candidates and \$430,464 to Ohio political party and caucus committees.

"The list of members of this committee reads like a 'who's who' of environmental violators and their attorneys,' said Marilyn Wall, Chair of the Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club. Wall noted that AK Steel is the subject of a major federal lawsuit on air pollution, Georgia Pacific was sued by its neighbors and ultimately settled for \$22 million, and American Electric Power bought the village of Cheshire to avoid air pollution regulation at its Gavin coal plant.

1999-2002 Top Organizational Contributors	
FirstEnergy	\$517,568
Timken Company	\$461,954
Bricker and Eckler	\$337,094
Vorys Sater Seymour and Pease	\$275,713
American Electric Power (AEP)	\$235,072

Contributions by organizations represented on the committee include committee members, company PACs and employees.

"In case we needed further proof that industry is calling the shots at Ohio EPA, here we have it," said Teresa Mills, director of the Buckeye Environmental Network. "They didn't even make a

pretense of including citizens who live near polluted sites in making these recommendations, and announced that this is just the first step in a longer agenda to cut back on permitting in Ohio."

The Ohio EPA is responsible for implementation of the Clean Air Act in Ohio. The agency gives air permits to companies and designates the amount of pollution they are allowed to release. The Ohio EPA invited industries to give their recommendations and participate on the Ohio EPA Permit Processing Efficiency Committee. In February, Ohio EPA Director Christopher Jones announced that the agency was proposing major changes to its permitting process, adopting the recommendations of the committee. The recommended changes would cut in half the number of air pollution sources in Ohio required to receive permits. This would restrict the opportunity for public comment and intervention in those permits. These new rules are open for public comment until April 30, 2003.

- [1999-2002 contributions from interests on the Permit Committee](#) (7 KB xls file).
- [Aggregate contributions to Ohio statewide and legislative candidates and political parties](#) (3 KB xls).
- [Contributions from Permit Committee interests, sorted by candidate](#) (35 KB xls file).
- [Personal contributions of Permit Committee members](#) (108 KB xls file).
- [Top individual givers represented on the Permit Committee](#) (295 KB xls file)
- [Every single contribution from Permit Committee interests, including PACs and employees](#) (4.7 MB xls file).

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Ohio Citizen Action is the state's largest environmental organization, with 100,000 dues-paying members. A non-profit, non-partisan organization, Ohio Citizen Action was founded in 1975.