



NRDC Advocates for Full Information Disclosure: The power of information is a critical tool for environmental protection

In an age of global commerce and communications, informed citizens and motivated corporations can press for environmental improvements in China. Concerted efforts by the public to pressure China to reduce pollution will be an important supplement to national and provincial regulations and policies. If properly targeted to significant problems with practical solutions, NRDC believes that substantial progress can be made addressing China's most urgent environmental problems, problems which also affect the rest of the world.

The Dawning of a New Age in China

Over the past five years, China has begun to publicly disclose factory environmental performance through a new rating system called GreenWatch. With funding from the World Bank, Jiangsu Province is now evaluating and rating nearly 12,000 industrial and commercial operations. Each year, the operations are ranked by their impact on the environment and the results are published. Ratings are published each year. China's State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) has recommended that provinces across the country now adopt this initiative. With a similar spirit, the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, a non-governmental organization located in Beijing, has created a China Water Pollution Map to

comprehensively and publicly disclose pollution violators whose names have been provided by national, provincial, and local environmental authorities.

The power of public disclosure to supplement government regulation has been demonstrated in other countries. In the United States, the release of public information about each polluting factory under the Toxic Release Inventory is well recognized to have significantly reduced emissions from industrial plants across the country, even after several decades of extensive and successful mandatory environmental controls. The information galvanized citizens in the public and private sectors and focused attention on achieving additional reductions where they were needed most. Similar success is possible in China.



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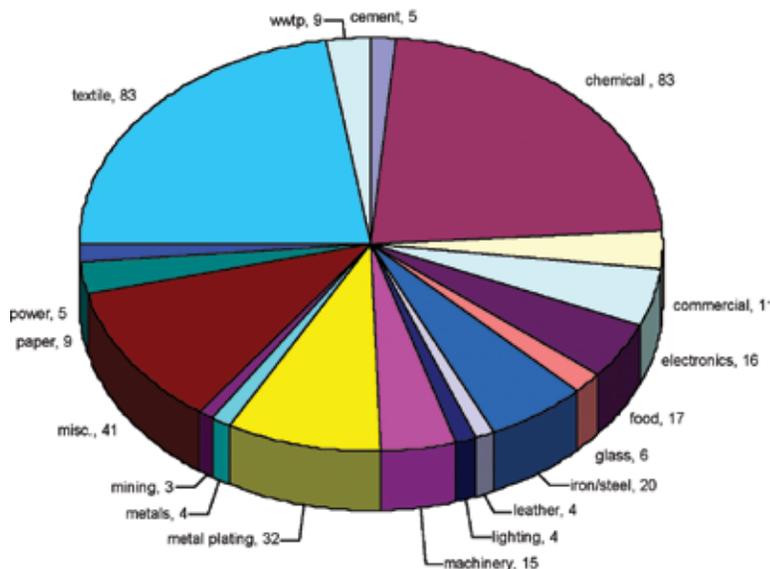
NRDC Pollution Information/Clean Production Initiative

Working closely with officials in the Jiangsu Academy of Environmental Science, NRDC collected the GreenWatch public ratings to date and after scrutinizing the list, identified textiles and chemical manufacturing as high priority industrial sectors.

purchases, presenting an excellent opportunity in Jiangsu Province. NRDC is working in this sector with selected firms to identify big problems in their supply chain, communicate their concern, and urge that improvements be undertaken as a high priority for the operations.

As the project matures, NRDC is eyeing some key improvements and expansions:

Biggest polluting facilities in Jiangsu Province



We are now providing these results to multinational corporations with significant operations in China, urging them to take notice of factories in violation that are part of their supply chain. Motivated corporations can insist on cleaner production processes and supply constructive pressure and technical assistance in these pollution hot spots. At the same time, NRDC will work with Jiangsu officials to find technical and financial means to solve problems at highly polluting factories, such as hosting workshops to educate plant managers about opportunities for improved efficiencies, less waste, and treatment/control technologies.

The textile sector is heavily represented on the “biggest polluter” list, has a highly visible and toxic effluent, and is linked directly to consumer apparel

- **Certification/verification.** We anticipate a need for corporations to certify and verify the existing ratings of factories in their supply chain, to add a level of rigor and public accountability to the basis of the GreenWatch ratings.

- **Technical assistance materials.** NRDC would like to create technical materials, one sector at a time, to help factories improve their environmental performance.

- **Consideration of other important environmental impacts.** NRDC would like to expand the public disclosure and rating system to include air pollution and energy use indicators and expand our direct work to other provinces in China.

- **Inclusion of quantitative information on violations.** NRDC would like to improve and expand upon the public ratings, again perhaps one sector at a time, to align the ratings with more quantitative effluent and emission permit limits.

This project represents an exciting “work-around” to the limits of government environmental staff and initiatives in China. Using the same electronic tools that allow the private sector to operate globally, we can address deadly pollution that knows no borders. The long and successful history of environmental improvements through public disclosure and accountability around the world are a model for China. This project was selected as one of NRDC’s six a strategic institutional priorities for the coming five years in its *Partnership for the Earth* campaign because of its potential to make significant progress addressing global environmental problems with sustainable solutions.