

LEPCs in Colorado:

How Does Public Participation Fit Their Mission?

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Abstract: Since their beginning, with the passage of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act in 1986, there has been confusion about the role of the Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs). They are federally mandated, organized by the states and operated locally. One issue is the role LEPCs play in providing the public with information about chemical hazards, and thus helping the public serve as industry watchdogs. This report examines national surveys of LEPCs and gives the results of a survey of 10 Colorado LEPCs, specifically looking at attitudes around citizen participation and methods of engineering it. The conclusion is that even very active and successful LEPCs in Colorado give little attention to community outreach and citizen participation. What is needed is an overhaul of the way LEPCs interact with a number of related agencies and organizations.

Introduction

The policy problem is whether Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) are working as Congress intended to facilitate the community right-to-know portion of the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA), also known as Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA). At issue is how the LEPCs see the part of their mission that deals with involving the public in community emergency planning. Related to that is how public involvement through EPCRA may affect the use of hazardous chemicals in communities across the country. Another part of EPCRA, the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), is an annual, national listing of toxic materials released into the environment by industries in the United States. It has been proposed that EPCRA, with its combination of community-right-to-know provisions and the TRI information on what's being released into the environment (as well as where it's released, how much is being released and by whom) will spur citizen activity and somehow positively influence the regulation of these hazardous materials. In discussing how public information laws can lead to socially desirable results, Blomquist (1990:559) observes, "indeed, public information laws have become more commonplace because of the nearly universal assumption that dissemination of information is socially desirable and thus leads to more efficient markets and more responsible behaviour by business, government and individuals."

The purpose of this paper is to describe and analyze selected LEPCs in Colorado in an effort to determine how they fulfill the mission Congress gave them (through the State Emergency Response Commissions [SERCs]). That mission is to involve the public in community emergency planning and to facilitate and engender public interest in hazardous material use, storage, transportation and emissions.

I am especially interested in this topic because it relates to my interest in citizen participation in policy making and my work as a communications practitioner. In researching how SARA has worked I found several reports that LEPCs have not been proactive in seeking public input or publicizing information on hazardous materials in their communities. Some writers credit Title III of SARA, and the threat of the public learning who's using or emitting hazardous chemicals, with reductions of hazardous emissions over the past 10 years. Will this continue to be an incentive if

communities and local interest groups don't help build public interest in the issue? It seems Congress counted on the public to perform what Rich, Conn and Owens (1993) call indirect regulation of environmental hazards through the provision of information to the public. If the public is not involved, will this indirect regulation continue to occur?

The research methodology included a literature review, review of government documents, interviews with government and special interest groups officials, and telephone interviews with the chairmen of 10 LEPCs in Colorado: Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Denver, Jefferson, Gunnison, Mesa, Washington and Weld counties, and the city of Colorado Springs. This representation, which includes the five counties of the Denver metro area and several rural counties, is heavily weighted toward the most active and successful LEPCs in Colorado, and is not intended as a representative sample of LEPCs in the State.

The Problem

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Carol Browner was quoted in the May 20, 1996 issue of Chemical and Engineering News as saying "putting information about toxic pollutants into the hands of the public is one of the strongest measures that can be taken to ensure cleaner air, safe drinking water and a healthy environment." Browner was discussing the addition of a number of chemicals to the TRI portion of SARA Title III, and hailing a court's decision endorsing EPA's right to do so. By many accounts the air and water in much of the United States is cleaner than it was 30 years ago, and is much cleaner than it would have been given our growth in size and use of energy and chemicals, if we had not had environmental regulations. Has putting information about pollutants into the hands of the public been a factor in the cleaner air and water? Are the LEPCs - set up to manage information about hazardous materials in their communities and to plan emergency procedures in the event of an accident involving a hazardous material - effective in their mission to maximize public participation in the planning procedures? They are also charged with involving the public; how do they fulfill that role?

Lester (1997:320) notes that "the dramatic reductions in the release of toxic chemicals into the environment provides some evidence that indirect regulatory tools that provide information to the public can be effective." He adds, however, the caveats that governmental implementation and citizen use of the community-right-to-know provisions associated with the TRI have been generally rated inadequate, and that while toxic emissions have declined since SARA⁽¹⁾, it doesn't mean SARA caused the declines.

It has been suggested that the potential embarrassment of having information about pollution emissions made public is what's motivating companies to take measures to lower their numbers. The TRI section of SARA Title III requires companies that have ten or more employees, and use certain amounts of any of more than 700 listed chemicals, to report information such as the maximum amount of chemicals on site, the number of pounds of hazardous materials released to the air, land and water, and whether discharges are treated, recovered or recycled. While SARA Title III doesn't require that companies change their pollution behavior, some call it "regulation by

embarrassment" (Vig and Kraft, 1997:259), and note that environmental groups use the TRI data to publicize heavy polluters. (The top 10 list of local polluters is an annual feature in many newspapers, a distinction any organizations would like to avoid.)

Origins of LEPCs

The LEPCs were created in each state by the State Emergency Response Commissions (SERCs), which are appointed by the governor. Both SERCs and LEPCs are mandated by SARA Title III. In many states, including Colorado, LEPCs were organized by counties. By federal law, each LEPC must consist of representatives of all of the following groups and organizations: elected and local officials, law enforcement, civil defense, firefighting, first aid, health, local environmental and transportation agencies, hospitals, broadcast and print media, community groups and representatives of facilities subject to the EPCRA requirements (Hadden, 1989).

SARA, which represented a major expansion of the original Superfund program and contains many other provisions in addition to EPCRA, was conceived in a time of congressional unhappiness with the implementation of environmental programs. William Ruckelshaus, the EPA's first administrator, had taken over after Anne Gorsuch-Burford was forced from the office in 1983, but the legacy of her mismanagement and the politicization of the program delayed funding for SARA until public pressure and effective lobbying by environmental groups led Congress to pass, and President Reagan to sign SARA into law in October 1986 (Kamieniecki and Steckenrider 1997). As a testament to Congressional frustration with the Reagan administration's continual delay in implementing environmental laws, SARA, in the words of Rosenbaum (1995:132), "is a monument to overcontrol." It contains 59 mandatory deadlines for the EPA, 48 deadlines for other government institutions and 14 deadlines for unspecified agencies (to be later named) reflecting not only the Congressional urge to micromanage environmental issues, but also a way to force action on items it considered essential (Lester, 1997:210). One aspect Congress considered essential was public oversight of the EPA and the right of citizens to bring civil suit against the EPA or industry. The public involvement section of SARA was in keeping with many federal environmental laws of the time, and, Lester notes, "environmentalists vigorously promoted, and subsequently used, public involvement programs as a means of mobilizing support for environmental regulation and countering the administrative influence of regulated interest" (1997: 211). A problem, however, with Congressional overcontrol is that it does not leave enough flexibility in the laws, especially when local agencies must organize and enforce the mandates. The resulting failures can erode the credibility of programs and agencies (Rosenbaum, 1995:133).

Tasks of the LEPCs

The initial task of the LEPCs was to develop, by October 17, 1988, an emergency plan that would allow them to prepare for and respond to chemical emergencies in their communities. They are also required annually to review, test and update the plan, which must include the identity and location of hazardous materials, procedures for immediate response to a chemical accident, ways to notify the public about actions they must take, names of coordinators at plants, and schedules and plans for testing the plan. After the plan is written and reviewed by the SERC, the LEPC is required to publicize the plan through public meetings or newspaper announcements and solicit public comments, as well as let the public know of any other LEPC activities of interest. LEPCs are also

responsible for reviewing emergency release and hazardous chemical inventory information submitted by local facilities and making this information available to the public upon request. It must also establish and publicize procedures for handling these requests.

This list of very specific duties required of the LEPCs (volunteer groups with no federal or state funding) is sometimes padded with other responsibilities individuals or organizations would like to see them take on, such as educating the public about the health or environmental risks of toxic chemical releases or publicizing the TRI numbers. However, there is no statutory requirement for them to do so. The argument is made that by including the provision for citizen suits in SARA Title III, Congress intended public involvement in the monitoring and planning for chemical use and storage, and that LEPCs are the logical way to achieve public involvement. An EPA document states hopefully, "The LEPCs ability to improve the safety and health of its community will be greatly enhanced by the support of an informed and active citizenry." In the opinion of Baram, Dillon and Ruffle, (1992:72) Congress intended that public discussion be an important part of SARA Title III, and the LEPCs are the groups to facilitate that discussion:

SARA does not explicitly require companies or LEPCs to undertake discussions with citizens about the meaning and value of the chemical data reported under SARA or to solicit feedback on community concerns. However, the legislative history reflects a goal of greater public awareness and understanding of local chemical risk issues. The question of who should be providing the public with the means to understand the chemical information and its implications remains to be answered. The LEPC may be the best vehicle for increasing public understanding of chemical risks and establishing ongoing dialogue with the public given its hypothetically broad community representation and ready access to chemical information.

Hadden (1989:132) argues that from the beginning the mandate for the LEPCs was unclear, "in cases like Title III's, in which a federal law places most of the burden for implementation on the states and localities, the lower levels of government may not have the same goals as Congress or the federal agency. Thus, federal purposes may be lost or weakened. This eventuality is especially likely when, as is also the case for Title III, the federal government is not providing the lower levels with any money for implementation." Hadden also recounts the results of a 1988 survey of Texas LEPC chairs in which nearly 40 percent disagreed with the statement "The LEPC should publicize right-to-know provisions," and one chairman stated that LEPCs do not have to publicize the right-to-know provision, instead stating, "people should take responsibility for themselves."

Reality of LEPCs

While Congress perhaps thought requiring a broad base of members for the LEPCs would automatically engender community-wide interest in its work, the reality is that many LEPCs are managed by county sheriff and fire departments, who, in many states, were managing the emergency response function before Title III became law. Hadden reports that in 1989 "SERCs and LEPCs are dominated by emergency response personnel rather than by citizens or environmental personnel." She notes "Unfortunately, the quasi-military organizations associated with emergency response, which depend upon strict hierarchies to achieve orderly and accurate actions under duress, are not much used to public outreach" (Hadden, 1989:75). The lack of consideration of right-to-know issues by LEPCs in the early days of Title III, continued through the 1990s, according to a study by Rich, Conn and Owens (1993) and a survey by Adams, Burns and Handwerk (1994). The latter group found that even the most proactive LEPCs in the country were deficient in public

communication. The Rich, Conn and Owens (1993:31) report concludes,

most LEPCs in our study have focused on the technical aspects of their job and have not made a concerted effort to bring hazardous materials issues to public attention. This is quite understandable given the constraints under which they labor. They generally run entirely on volunteer effort and have little or no independent budget or staff. Their mission has been defined primarily in terms of developing a technically adequate emergency response plan. As a result, they have few members with extensive background in public relations, citizen participation or communications. Most make risk communications a low priority and do not know how to go about obtaining public involvement even when it occurs to them to attempt to do so.

If they are not dominated by emergency responders, the LEPCs may be heavily influenced by industry. Baram, Dillon and Ruffle (1992:49) describe ways in which those regulated by EPCRA sought to influence its work, "with the passage of SARA and its requirements for the formation of local committees, Dow and OxyChem promoted the formation of LEPCs around the existing Community Awareness and Emergency Response ⁽²⁾ teams in which they had been participating."

Implementation and Evaluation stages of the policy process

Implementation and evaluation, two of the six steps in the policy process, (preceded by initiation, estimation and selection, and followed by termination) seek to determine how a policy actually works when translated from theory to reality, and how a policy can be adapted to work better and avoid unintended consequences. In examining the implementation of LEPCs through SARA Title III, it appears Congress made mistakes similar to those outlined by Pressman and Wildavsky (1993:99) in their book on the failure of a federal project in Oakland:

- 1) direct incompatibility with other commitments - the industry representatives who, along with emergency responders, dominate most LEPCs, for the most part don't welcome public scrutiny of their work in hazardous chemicals;
- 2) a preference for other programs - companies already working with the Chemical Manufacturers Association CAER liked the way it shifted the emphasis to the measures taken for safety rather than the amounts or types of chemicals in use;
- 3) simultaneous commitments to other projects - most LEPCs see emergency response and emergency planning, whatever the cause of the emergency, as their most important jobs and have little time or budget for what they seen as peripheral duties; and
- 4) dependence on others who lack a sense of urgency in the project - LEPCs follow the direction of their SERCs, and may receive, at the most, only partial grants to cover some training exercises.

Pressman and Wildavsky stress that implementation "must not be conceived as a process that takes place after, and independent of, the design of the policy" (1984:143). While it may be generous to characterize EPCRA as a policy that was designed, clearly no one was thinking of implementation or evaluation when it was being written.

The Actors

In addition to the Colorado LEPC chairs, most of whom carry a law enforcement, fire fighting or emergency management title⁽³⁾, others active in the issues of SARA Title III are officials

with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment who work with the SERC and are the repository for some SARA Title III information; attorney and environmental activist Russell Weiner; attorney, Colorado SERC member and chair of the Jefferson County LEPC, Tim Gablehouse, and, at various times and to a lesser extent, public interest groups such as CoPirg, the Sierra Club and Colorado People's Environmental & Economic Network.

The perspective of the LEPC chairs interviewed can be summarized as a dedication to emergency planning and response and a sense of frustration around the public participation areas of SARA Title III. Attorneys Weiner and Gablehouse, with different approaches to SARA Title III, (Weiner sues industries out of compliance on behalf of citizens and Gablehouse helps industries stay in compliance) both seem to reflect the idea that the LEPCs are doing a difficult job with limited resources and have neither the expertise, time or desire to facilitate additional public participation. The interest groups, both by their definition and that of several LEPC chairs, are only marginally involved with the LEPCs, and monitor rather than take part in the day-to-day functioning of the LEPCs.

Research Findings

The findings from the interviews with the 10 LEPC Chairmen will be discussed with the more quantitative results first, followed by the more qualitative data:

- Level of public interest in emergency planning - 50 percent said there is little interest in emergency planning in their community; 40 percent reported some interest and 10 percent indicated a great deal of interest.
- Level of citizen interest in possible dangers associated with chemicals in the community - 40 percent said there is little interest, 20 percent said some interest, 20 percent reported a great deal of interest, and 20 percent said the interest is totally dependent on where the citizen lives.
- Level of citizen involvement in emergency planning - 60 percent report little or no involvement, 20 percent said some and 10 percent said a good deal of involvement.
- Level of media interest toward emergency planning - 50 percent reported little coverage, 40 percent said there is some coverage, and 10 percent said there is good media coverage.
- Members of LEPC not representing industry or government - 80 percent of the LEPCs report having members who do not represent regulated industry or a governmental office, 20 percent have no members not affiliated with industry or government.
- Enactment of Section 112r of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments - 30 percent said this will have a great deal of impact on the work of their LEPC, 40 percent said some impact, and 30 percent anticipate not much impact.

Themes

Major themes involving community interest, community outreach, media/communications, and the bureaucracy of SARA Title III, emerged from the interviews:

Community Interest - The LEPC chairs are philosophical about what they perceive as a lack of interest among citizens about the emergency planning work they do and the issues surrounding hazardous chemicals in the community. They attribute the low interest to the many other facets of life people are busy with and the idea that the public trusts them to do their job, as well as their experience that people typically become involved in local issues when they have a monetary stake in the outcome. Comments included the following:

People must see a correlation between their safety or quality of life before they take an interest in the dangers posed by chemicals in the community.

People become interested in hazardous chemical issues not because they're interested in the environment, but because they're interested in their environment.

People try to use SARA Title III to get facilities they don't like closed, but when they find out the facilities are operating within the law, they lose interest.

Community Outreach - Many LEPC Chairmen say having open meetings and publishing notices of the meetings in a local newspaper is their primary method of fostering public involvement. Some are doing other outreach, but it is based more on providing one-way information on household and weather-related hazards. The most frequent form of community outreach is an annual household hazardous materials collection, usually sponsored in conjunction with the local fire department. Only one Chairman gave community outreach a high priority, while 90 percent said the most important purpose of the LEPC, after the response plan has been prepared and approved, is to practice or exercise the plan on a regular basis.

The best way to gain public interest and involvement is to provide a free meal at meetings.

The best way to present local hazardous material information to the public is through the local fire department, whom most people see as a non-threatening and trusted entity.

Media/Communications - Most LEPCs send notices to their local media of meetings and exercises and some report good coverage of annual emergency drills. A few have representatives from the media who do attend LEPC meetings and take an interest in promoting information about emergency planning and hazardous materials. For the most part, however, they only see the media after an accident or during a disaster. Some said it's not the media's job to promote the work of the LEPC but others were more critical of the lack of in-depth coverage of emergency planning and other public interest issues. Instead of counting on mass media coverage, many LEPCs rely on brochures that are mailed, inserted in newspapers or distributed by firemen to educate citizens about hazards in the community. However, the emphasis is on weather related hazards, hazardous chemicals in the home, and the use of propane in gas grills, not on what industry is doing with chemicals in the community.

The media is interested in reporting on disasters and accidents, not ways to prevent them.

Mass media is not a good way to try to interest the community.

Media doesn't have the time or interest to examine issues about hazardous materials in the

community

Bureaucracy of SARA Title III. - Most LEPC Chairmen accept the mounds of paperwork associated with the law and are appreciative of the support they receive from the State. They want more funding for training and a commitment to simplified and uniform reporting forms, along with delivery of an EPA-promised computerized reporting method that really works. Several LEPC Chairmen praised the work Tim Gablehouse⁽⁴⁾ in helping them and community officials understand and implement SARA Title III as well as Section 112r of the Clean Air Act Amendments.

SARA Title III was written inside the Beltway and is unrealistic out here, companies have to fill out thousands of forms no one wants. I do know of a fire department that shreds the forms they get and uses the paper to soak up oil spills; it's the best use of those forms.

Analysis of the Problem

The responses from the LEPC chairs in Colorado indicate similar situations and attitudes to those of other LEPCs around the country in earlier research studies. There is dedication to the best emergency response planning and execution possible, an acknowledgment that most members of the public don't care about hazardous chemicals unless directly affected, a sense that the media will not give coverage to planning or policy issues unless there's an accident, and the realization that there is no leadership or funding for community outreach activities. The trend toward almost a complete emphasis by LEPCs on emergency response planning will probably continue as most are managed by fire and sheriff departments, and their most pressing goal is to assure safety, not public participation, even though in the long-run, public involvement in hazardous material use, storage and transportation, and presumably avoiding problems with these materials, may be more productive than training emergency responders in how to deal with accidents. Even when LEPCs are touted for having extensive citizen outreach, the commendation is based on methods they've employed to tell citizens what to do in case of an emergency or how to dispose of chemicals, rather than how to work with government and others to regulate the use of hazardous chemicals (Baram, Dillon and Ruffle, 1992).

The factors that shaped this trend include the formation of emergency response planning teams in many counties prior to the SARA legislation and its community involvement language, the placement of responsibility for emergency response planning and execution with the fire and sheriffs offices, and the more immediate demands of responding to emergencies rather than devoting resources seeking public input on how to avoid emergencies. This placement of LEPC responsibility with emergency responders also may affect the way information is provided to the public. In some localities, bureaucratic impediments to information were created when LEPCs and SERCs established procedures for public access to Title III reports (Hadden, 1989). Agencies that treated Title III records the same way they regarded government information under the Freedom of Information Act required written requests for specific documents, rather than allowing citizens to browse through the information, as Hadden says the law intended.

This appears not to be the case in Colorado, where LEPCs make their records available to the public through local libraries.

Risk Communications

An additional complication in providing hazardous material information to the public is the skill set necessary to adequately conduct risk communications. One-way transmission of expert knowledge to the uninformed works well in emergency situations, but doesn't work at all when doing risk communications (Baram, Dillon and Ruffle, 1992). This specialized form of communications encompasses identifying all stakeholders, active listening by all involved, and a comprehensive exchange of information and beliefs. It is successful when it improves the level of understanding of relevant issues and enables those involved to feel they are sufficiently informed to make decisions for themselves. Risk communications is typically complicated by the highly technical nature of much of the information around hazardous chemicals, such as threshold amounts for storage, reactions of various chemicals, effects of chemical releases on human health and the environment, and lack of good alternatives for many of the chemicals on which society relies. Hadden (1989) wonders who is responsible for ensuring that citizens understand technical language, and concludes that while citizens have a right to know hazardous material information, experts should still make policy decisions. Blomquist (1990) believes having a great deal of information about hazardous materials made public without the proper context (he doesn't say who should provide the context) can be damaging to society.

A more basic question about the intended purposes of the LEPCs and public information is the supposed role of the media. Even if the media were more interested in the significance of planning surrounding hazardous materials rather than simply covering disaster and controversy, they are ill-equipped to publicize the kind of information considered by the LEPCs: technical information, information that involve uncertainties, information the experts either can't agree on or can't condense into a sound bite. Requiring each LEPC to have representation from the media does not translate into good media coverage, or even any coverage at all. The media might even suggest it's a conflict of interest for a media person serving on an LEPC to push those stories. The expectation that having a person from a media outlet on each LEPC would facilitate public participation in the LEPC work seems naive.

Future

A lack of media interest and citizen involvement in the work of LEPCs may change in 1999, not due to more active SARA Title III outreach, but through the requirement of a part of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Section 112r of those amendments requires the filing of Risk Management Plans, including a worst case scenario, from thousands of facilities around the country by June 1, 1999. Some Colorado LEPCs are very concerned about the public reaction to these scenarios and wonder about the Congressional intent in requiring them. There was almost unanimous agreement among the LEPC chairmen interviewed that 112r will arouse media attention due to the almost sensationalistic methods required by the statute to describe what could happen if the maximum amount of chemicals at a facility leaked or exploded in the least favorable conditions

for containment. Facilities will be required to estimate the kill zone for these scenarios in a way which assumes everything will go wrong. While some LEPC chairmen say this is already the way they plan for emergency responses, others worry that giving this information to the public will cause needless concern and even panic. Others wonder if this amendment to the Clean Air Act is a way for Congress to force the attention of the public to what is going on, chemically speaking, in their communities. While the outcry of the media and public over worst case scenarios and kill zones encompassing entire metro areas may be tumultuous for a time, if the scenarios are viewed as totally unrealistic they can easily be dismissed by those who might accuse the government of "crying wolf," a predicament that could make serious community involvement in planning even more difficult. Another outcome, sometimes seen in risk communication, is that the scenarios are too frightening to deal with, so people ignore them because they are unable to process the information (Gablehouse, 1998).

Recommendations

Declaring that the LEPCs should do more in community outreach because there is no one else to do it is not a real solution, nor is describing how beneficial it would be for everyone if the LEPCs facilitated more active public participation. What is needed is leadership at the national and state levels to make public participation more of a priority, and the budget, training and incentives for the local LEPCs to carry out that mission. For example, the state commissions could establish a media awards program for coverage of hazardous materials planning efforts in local communities. A high school journalism competition for stories on hazardous material use and storage in the community could provide cash or scholarships and lead to the beginnings of grass-roots community understanding of the issues. These, however, are really add-on incentives not addressing the core of the problem, which is a lack of a way for citizens to learn about hazardous materials without having to devote the rest of their lives to learning about the issues.

The LEPCs are well-intentioned. Some in Colorado have been able to carve out budgets for community outreach, like having brochures printed, or hosting a community breakfast where emergency planning is discussed, others are struggling. None of the LEPC chairman interviewed see facilitating public participation as a key role for them.

How else might public involvement in hazardous materials planning be engineered? As Hadden observes we have mechanisms for ways in which citizens and government may interact, but virtually none through which citizens can come together with the private sector in an orderly and systematic way. She implies LEPCs could be adapted to this purpose for an expanded right-to-know in "which citizens are active participants in decision about hazardous material in their communities rather than passive recipients of chemical inventory data and risk evaluations prepared by experts" (Hadden, 1989: 148). Perhaps it's time for the LEPCs, the SERCs, the Chemical Manufacturers Association, the EPA and environmental interest groups to come together to structure a meaningful community forum on hazardous chemicals and how they are used and discarded in our lives everyday. The structure should be done at the national or regional level, with funds provided to the SERCs to administer the program

Conclusion

The goal of this paper was to examine some LEPCs in Colorado to determine how they manage the duties both required and assumed for them and to compare some of these results to the findings of a national study of LEPCs. The problem is whether LEPCs are working to achieve what some people call "indirect regulation" through facilitating public participation. The major finding is that in

Colorado, for the most part, they are not concerned about public participation as much as what they see as their primary role to construct an emergency plan and their secondary role to provide training and resources for emergency responders. While these are vital functions, if congressional intent for SARA Title III was to facilitate public involvement through the LEPC, that is not working and a reconfiguration of the LEPC responsibilities is in order.

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Kimberly Parker, LEPC Chairman, Mesa County

Capt. William Ragsdale, LEPC Chairman, Colorado Springs

George Severin, LEPC Chairman, Washington County

Pete Smith, Executive Director, CoPIRG

Larry Stern, LEPC Chairman, Boulder County

JoAnn Stone, LEPC Chairman, Gunnison County

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1.

¹ The first TRI in 1987 showed industry released 5.2 billion pounds of toxic pollutants into the environment. By 1992 this figure dropped 40 percent to 3.16 billion pounds. (EPA, 1992 Toxics Release Inventory National Report [Washington, D.C.: Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, 1994].)

2.

² The Community Awareness and Emergency Response (CAER) teams were developed by the Chemical Manufacturers Association in 1985 following the Union Carbide accident in Bhopal, India.

3.

³ In Colorado, the County Sheriff is the default LEPC chair.

4.

⁴ Mr. Gablehouse is Chairman of the Jefferson County LEPC and an attorney in private practice.