

urbanization, rapid industrialization, use of outdated technologies and poor sanitation nationwide have resulted in serious air, land and water pollution. The most serious are: urban water quality, rural industrial pollution and urban air quality. Other pollution issues, such as industrial and domestic solid waste disposal and hazardous and toxic wastes also figure prominently.

Lack of fresh water in urban areas may prove to have the most immediate potential for eco-militancy. Increasingly, the quality of drinking water in China's cities appears to be at risk. Much of China's coastal waters and many rivers are polluted, and both surface and ground waters in many areas are contaminated.<sup>48</sup> The predominant source of pollution in urban areas is industrial wastewater. Main pollutants include nitrates, sulfates, phenols, arsenic, cyanide and chromium.<sup>49</sup> Only about one-third of industrial waste water is treated, and even after treatment some of the water fails to meet effluent discharge standards. The share of municipal sewage receiving treatment is even lower.<sup>50</sup> This, in conjunction with industrial waste, has led to high levels of colibacillus bacteria and oxygen-consuming substances.<sup>51</sup>

Pollution problems are also acute in rural areas. Estimates from China's Ministry of Public Health suggest that only one in seven rural Chinese has access to safe drinking water. Fertilizer use contributes to poor water quality through the leaching of nitrates into groundwater and runoff into streams. Yet, it is the township and village enterprises (TVEs) that receive much of the blame for rural industrial pollution. These enterprises are typically small, widely scattered and employ out-dated technology. Per ton of paper, for example, rural paper mills generate twice the amount of wastewater of state-run mills. The concentration of pollutants in the rural mills' wastewater is also three times that from state-run mills. Moreover, in general,

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<sup>48</sup>Pollution of coastal water in northern China has been implicated in a sharp drop in prawn and shellfish harvests. World Bank, World Development Report 1992: Development and the Environment, p.49.

<sup>49</sup>Qu Geping and Li Jinchang, translated by Jiang Baozhong and Gu Ran, Population and the Environment in China, 1994, p.34.

<sup>50</sup>World Bank, "China Environmental Strategy Paper," Report No. 9669-CHA, 1992, p.ix.

<sup>51</sup>Research on 99 water sources in 44 cities found that water quality at 51 sources failed to meet Chinese standards. Qu Geping and Li Jinchang, translated by Jiang Baozhong and Gu Ran, Population and the Environment in China, 1994, p.35.