

Canada is encouraged by the public statements of President Bush, who recently said that the time for study of acid rain had passed, and the time for action had arrived. He expressed support for a cut of "millions of tons" in acid rain-causing emissions by the year 2000. Canada believes that such a position is fully supported by the extensive scientific research on acid rain which has been carried out over several decades in Canada, the United States and Europe.

Canada's general approach to the acid rain problem was clearly set out by Prime Minister Mulroney in his address to the joint session of the American Congress in April 1988. He said, "We invite the Administration, and the leadership of Congress to conclude an accord whereby we agree on a schedule and targets for reducing acid rain that crosses our border."

Canada's Acid Rain Control Program

In March 1985, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced that Canada would implement a comprehensive acid rain control program. The program is based on the scientifically derived objective that acid fallout must be reduced to less than 20 kilograms per hectare (18 pounds per acre) per year in all vulnerable areas. Canadian scientists have found that damage occurs when acid fallout is above this level; they have also determined that when acid fallout drops below this threshold level, recovery of the environment starts to take place. Scientific information in the United States and many European countries supports this objective.

Canadian scientists have gone through the calculations to determine the limits of sulphur dioxide that can be released into the atmosphere and the areas from which it can come, in order to achieve the 20 kilogram per hectare objective. They have concluded two things. First, total annual sulphur dioxide emissions from the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border eastward must be reduced to 2.3 million tonnes (about 50 per cent of the 1980 level). Second, the transboundary flows of sulphur dioxide from the United States into eastern Canada must be reduced to about 2 million tonnes per year (again, about 50 per cent of the 1980 level).

Canada is well on the way to delivering its part of the bargain. All actions required under the Canadian Acid Rain Control Program are on, or ahead of schedule:

- Sulphur dioxide emissions in the seven eastern-most provinces are already almost 40 per cent below the levels allowed in 1980;