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CANADA RATIFIES ECE CONVENTION ON LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, and the Minister of Environment, the Honourable John Roberts, announced today that Canada has deposited with the United Nations in New York its instrument of ratification of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution. The Convention, which was negotiated under the auspices of the ECE, of which Canada is a member, was signed by 33 member states at a high-level meeting in Geneva in November 1979. It will officially enter into force on the ninetieth day after the deposit of the instruments of ratification of 24 states. Ten countries have ratified to date.

The Convention represents a significant diplomatic achievement in that it is the first international convention on transboundary air pollution. It is a positive step in the development of environmental law and provides impetus to achieve politically and economically acceptable solutions to transboundary air pollution both in Europe and North America.

The accord affirms the determination of the contracting parties to limit air pollution, including long-range transboundary air pollution, and provides for the development of policies and strategies to combat the discharge of air pollutants. It also provides for co-operation in the conduct of research and in the development of air pollution control technology as well as for an exchange of information and consultations.

Dr. Roberts said he hopes that the Convention "will serve to provide useful direction in the development of an agreement between Canada and the United States".