

NAFTA - ENVIRONMENT

WHAT'S IN THE AGREEMENT

The NAFTA represents an important step forward in dealing with trade and the environment. It contains more environmental provisions than any previous trade agreement. Canada was an active proponent of a number of the environmental provisions. The willingness of Mexico and the United States to accept them demonstrates the commitment of both countries to working to improve our common continental environment. The environmental provisions include:

- ◆ a strong commitment to sustainable development, and environmental protection and enforcement;
- ◆ the right of Canada to determine the level of protection required to protect its environment and its human, animal or plant life or health;
- ◆ the right to maintain environmental standards that are higher than those recommended by international organizations;
- ◆ recognition that NAFTA countries should not lower health, safety or environmental standards (*create pollution havens*) to attract investment; and
- ◆ provision for special scientific review boards to advise dispute settlement panels if environmental issues are raised.

BENEFITS FOR CANADA

- ◆ Canada's high environmental standards are maintained and can be strengthened.
- ◆ The NAFTA incorporates many recommendations put forward by the provinces, advisory panels and environmental interest groups.
- ◆ The NAFTA explicitly protects the rights of Canada's federal, provincial, territorial and local governments to determine appropriate levels of environmental protection for their own regions.
- ◆ The NAFTA provides greater opportunities for Canadian exporters of pollution-abatement equipment and waste-management services.