

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, and Environment Minister, the Honourable Jack Davis, today announced that a Report on transboundary air pollution in the Detroit-Windsor and Sarnia-Port Huron areas has been presented by the International Joint Commission to the Governments of Canada and the United States.

The report is the product of extensive investigations carried out by the Commission over the past six years. The Commission's inquiry involved a meteorological study of the two areas, measurement of the contamination of air masses crossing the International Boundary, identification and quantification of the sources of transboundary air pollution and determination of the resulting adverse effects.

The Commission found that there is transboundary pollution in both areas. In the Detroit-Windsor area, roughly 90 per cent of particulates and 94 per cent of sulphur oxides originated in the U.S.

In the Sarnia-Port Huron area approximately 52 per cent of the particulates and 27 per cent of sulphur oxides originated in Canada.

The malodours experienced in Port Huron and Marine City, Michigan, were due to transboundary movement from the Canadian side. The principal sources of the major pollutants, particulates and sulphur oxides in the Detroit River areas were the steam electric power plant and metallurgical industries in Wayne County, Michigan. The principal sources of these air contaminants in the St. Clair River area were the steam electric power plants in Michigan and the oil refineries and chemical industries near Sarnia.

The Commission has submitted a comprehensive action plan for correcting this serious situation. The Commission has recommended first, that the federal, provincial and state authorities adopt the general and specific air quality objectives proposed by the Commission; secondly, that the Governments of Canada and the United States, with appropriate participation by the Province of Ontario, the State of Michigan and Wayne County, "enter into an agreement on schedules for the implementation, at the earliest practicable date, of preventive and remedial measures to achieve the said Air Quality Objectives and a uniform method for assessing air quality"; third, that the governments concerned enter into agreement on co-ordinated procedures under which the regulatory agencies in both countries will respond quickly to adverse atmospheric conditions when these arise; fourth, that the two Governments, in concert with provincial and state agencies and industry, expand their air quality research programmes; and finally, that the Commission itself be assigned a new role of surveillance and monitoring the programmes and making further recommendations. In this connection, the Commission has proposed the establishment of a permanent international advisory board, and citizens advisory groups, to assist it in carrying out its duties.

In the view of the Canadian authorities, the Commission has made a sound analysis of the problems of transboundary pollution in these areas, and has confirmed that a serious situation exists. The Canadian Government views with concern the situation described by the Commission and considers that the Commission's recommendations, if implemented by the responsible authorities on a co-operative basis, should result in a more rapid improvement in air quality in these areas, and protect air quality in the future. The Canadian Government is ready to play its full part in the kind of measures recommended by the Commission. The provisions of Canada's Clean Air Act of 1971, would provide the necessary basis for participation in the kind of international agreement recommended by the Commission.