



news release

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CANADA RATIFIES BASEL CONVENTION

The federal government has taken a significant step toward ensuring the proper management of transboundary movement and disposal of hazardous waste on an international scale.

Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, and Environment Minister, the Honourable Jean Charest, today announced that Canada has ratified the United Nations Basel Convention. The Convention sets common goals and objectives and establishes harmonized procedures for all parties to follow when hazardous wastes are moved between member countries.

"This convention is an important move toward environmental responsibility on a global scale," said Mrs. McDougall.

"Ratification of the Basel Convention allows Canada to honour its international obligations, made at the Earth Summit in Rio, to deal with hazardous waste in an environmentally sound manner," said Mr. Charest.

Countries that have ratified the Convention can import and export hazardous waste only among themselves. However, the Convention does permit an exception to this requirement, if a separate bilateral agreement exists that is compatible with its provisions. Such is the case with the Canada-United States Agreement on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes. Another is the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Council Decision on the control of transfrontier movements of hazardous wastes destined for recovery operations within the OECD area.

The new proposed federal regulations on import and export of hazardous waste under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act provide the measures necessary to implement the provisions of the Convention.

The Basel Convention, which Canada signed in March 1989, came into force on May 5, 1992. To date, 26 of the 53 signatory countries have ratified the Convention.