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CANADA REACHES FOREST FIRE FIGHTING ARRANGEMENT WITH USA

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, announced today that an agreement has been reached between Canada and the United States authorizing the direct exchange of forest fire fighting resources among participating departments and agencies of the two countries.

The Arrangement was negotiated by the Department of External Affairs on behalf of provincial and federal departments involved in fighting forest fires, and ratified through an exchange of diplomatic notes between the two countries. The Canadian Committee on Forest Fire Control, which includes representatives from federal, provincial, industry and non-government fire control agencies, was instrumental in working out the terms.

Dr. MacGuigan expressed satisfaction that the conclusion of the Arrangement will facilitate the ability of both countries to work together for mutual benefit.

This Arrangement authorizes individual provincial and federal agencies to deal directly with U.S. federal agencies in exchanging fire fighting resources as the need arises without having to go through complicated channels of approval each time.

All provinces are included in the agreement except Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Newfoundland which have chosen to opt out. These provinces may join at any time. Federal departments involved are Indian and Northern Affairs and Environment Canada.

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