

ON ENFORCEMENT...***Is Canada pressuring Mexico to improve its environmental enforcement?***

-- Mexico is striving to improve its environment. And Canada is co-operating with Mexico on environmental issues.

-- Mexico passed a comprehensive environmental law in 1988. Regulations set standards comparable to those of industrialized countries on hazardous waste disposal, air pollution and other emissions regulations.

-- Mexico has also legislated a requirement for environmental impact assessments on new capital investments. In fact, the economic opportunities stemming from a NAFTA offer Mexico an unprecedented opportunity to improve its environmental protection and enforcement procedures.

-- Mexico has also started cracking down on polluters. More than 300 environmental inspectors work at the federal level, and there are others at the state level. More than 900 plants have been closed on a temporary or permanent basis.

-- In 1991, Mexico permanently shut down an oil refinery in Mexico City because of pollution. In response to new government regulations, large businesses such as General Motors will construct new plants away from the heavily polluted Mexico City metropolitan area.

-- The NAFTA commits the three countries to work together to enhance their standards and requires co-operation on the "development, application and enforcement of standards." Canada is already co-operating with Mexico on enforcement issues under the terms of a Canada-Mexico bilateral environmental agreement.