

GOVERNING TRANSPORTATION AND TRADE IN HAZARDOUS WASTES

Every year, between 300 and 400 million tons of hazardous waste is generated around the world. While it poses an obvious environmental hazard if not carefully managed, much of this waste can be transported safely from one country to another and recycled for industrial use. This presents an important economic opportunity for Canadian industries. In order to take advantage of this opportunity, while ensuring protection of the environment, it is necessary to develop international laws to ensure safe transportation and trade in hazardous waste.

- Canada signed the Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (the Basel Convention) in March 1989. The Convention establishes a framework to ensure that trade in hazardous waste does not harm the environment or human health. It also prohibits exports to and imports from countries that are not party to the Convention.
- The Basel Convention complements a Canadian federal law that ensures that any wastes entering Canada have been approved by a competent Canadian authority and are handled in accordance with strict standards.
- Hazardous waste presents an opportunity for those countries that are able to recycle these substances in a way that is both environmentally sound and profitable. Canada will ratify the Basel Convention as soon as regulations are drafted that permit responsible Canadian industries to take advantage of recycling opportunities while ensuring strict environmental and health safeguards.