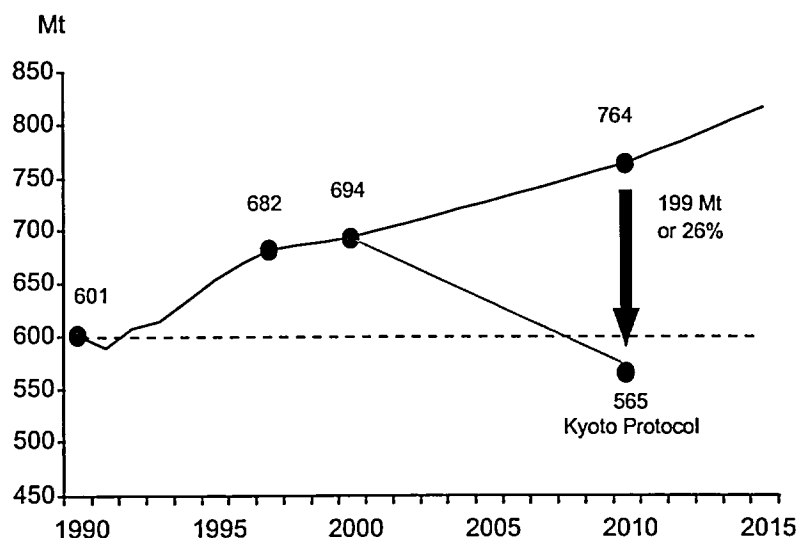


In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development popularized the term “sustainable development”, which it defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. In Canada’s energy context, sustainable development can be interpreted as managing energy’s contribution to current well-being and the development of the Canadian economy in a manner that protects environmental quality and ensures resources to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Sustainable development does not imply adopting or abandoning any particular sources of energy. The challenge of sustainable development is not to guarantee that future generations will have specific reserve levels for any particular form of energy. The energy mix in Canada will continue to evolve, as it has in the past, due to the relative prices of various energy sources, advances in science, changes in technology, and demand for new fuels. The key is to ensure that future generations enjoy uncompromised access to the services energy provides—heat, light, motive power, and information and communications. Government’s role includes assessing changes in energy needs and demands and looking ahead to identify new, more efficient, effective, and environmentally acceptable approaches to providing energy services.

Sustainable development requires us to examine the present mix of energy production in Canada; to develop new, more environmentally benign energy technologies; to use energy more efficiently; and to ensure that the generations that follow enjoy an equally secure energy future and unimpaired environmental quality.

Canada’s “policy as usual” emissions projection and the Kyoto Protocol.



Source: *The Path Forward to Sustainable Development Strategy 2000—A Discussion Paper*. Natural Resources Canada, July 2000.