

PART II, SECTION II

CHANGING CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

Background

Many Canadians have recognized the need to address issues of consumption and have translated this into actions. Opinion research indicates that Canadians believe that they will have to consume less and are willing to achieve sustainability through higher prices, as well as voluntary changes in lifestyles. Specific activities through which Canadians have demonstrated concern over their consumption patterns have included efforts to reduce household, business and industrial waste through recycling programs and composting, the use of products made from recycled materials, and improved energy and water efficiency and conservation.

Focussing on Unsustainable Patterns of Production and Consumption

Consumption issues have provided both a focus for attention and an opportunity for partnerships within and between agencies, institutions, businesses and communities.

Many Canadian NGOs have linked consumption issues to broader concerns about economic, political and social relationships in their public education efforts.

(a) State of the Environment Reporting

One method of informing people about consumption is through state of the environment reporting. State of the environment (SOE) reports provide current information on all aspects of the Canadian environment, including conditions and trends, relationships between human activities and the environment, effects of changes on ecosystems and resource use, and efforts to protect and restore the environment. This information can help government policy makers, private-sector decision makers and consumers make responsible choices. Canada's national 1996 SOE report will include a chapter on