

THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF THE NAFTA

Why didn't the government subject the NAFTA to a full environmental assessment with quantitative results?

--There are two different processes by which policies and projects are reviewed for environmental considerations.

--In the case of projects, such as dams, mines and factories, the potential environmental effects can be quantified.

--In the case of policies, which set frameworks or guidelines, the environmental impact will depend on future actions.

--Therefore, environmental reviews of policies can anticipate trends but cannot make precise measurements.

Is this review credible? It was done by a government committee, not by an independent body.

-- The review is credible. The Committee called on a variety of expert advice, including environmental groups.

-- Moreover, as a government committee it was able to consult the negotiators, review the state of negotiations and offer advice, while the negotiations were still under way.

-- The interchange between the Committee and the negotiators ensured that environmental concerns were taken into consideration at every phase of the negotiations.

-- The review was not an after-the-fact evaluation. It was part of an ongoing process that influenced the outcome of the NAFTA.

What were the conclusions of the review?

-- The NAFTA contains more environmental provisions than any other trade agreement.

-- It concludes that the NAFTA will not have a significant effect on Canada's environment.

-- The evidence suggests that business migration for environmental reasons