

in governance related to sustainable development issues, including the environment:

Environmental Issues

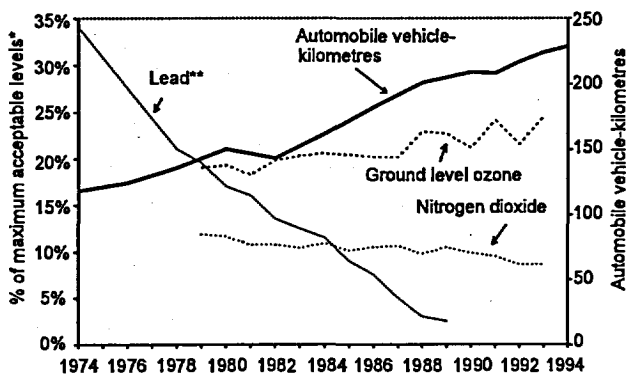
Air quality issues have been an important focus for environmental protection activities by governments and the private sector. Regulatory changes by Canada's federal and provincial governments have been supported by technological advances and behavioural changes that have reduced the production and emissions of many contaminants. These efforts have also benefited from action by partnerships involving industries, nongovernmental organizations, and communities.

Canada has exceeded its international commitments on the reduction and elimination of substances that destroy the **ozone** layer in the earth's stratosphere. We are also meeting or

exceeding domestic and international targets for emissions contributing to acid rain. We participate in international efforts that are expected to control the long-range transport of heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants, including PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) and pesticides such as DDT. Other results have included declining levels of some particulates and the virtual disappearance of lead from Canadian air as a result of the 1990 phaseout of lead as a gasoline additive for road vehicles.

Important air quality issues remain. Regions of Canada such as the Windsor-Quebec corridor, the lower Fraser River valley, and the Bay of Fundy are prone to elevated smog levels due in part to geographic location as well as pollution from sources such as industries, transportation, and energy production. More than 12 million cars are in use in Canada—one for nearly every two Canadians—and their use is expected to increase. Canadian objectives for particulate matter in air do not reflect the current scientific understanding of the health effects or the priority that Canadian governments are placing on this as a public health issue. A federal-provincial working group has been assessing the health effects of particulate matter in air and will be making recommendations for objectives for Canada in May 1997.

Automobile Use and Selected Urban Air Pollutants



* Based on average ambient levels of air pollutants over the year as measured in urban areas through the National Air Pollution Surveillance Network.

** There is no given "maximum acceptable level" for lead; a value of 2 micrograms per cubic metre was assumed solely for comparison purposes.

Source: Environment Canada

Automobiles are one major source of air pollution, and their use is increasing. Some key pollutants have declined; others are still a concern.

Canada has made significant progress in **water quality issues**, cleaning up and preventing pollution in both freshwater and oceans. Matters have improved from a time when major bodies of water such as Lake Erie were deemed to be dead because of the effects of pollution from cities, industries, and agriculture. Stronger laws, increasing demand for greener products, and changes in behaviour have helped to bring about important reductions in the levels of many emissions. For example, Canada's forest products industry cut discharges of dioxins and furans by 98.4 percent from 1988 to 1993. The minerals and metals industry has reduced its impacts on watersheds. Broad strategies to manage watersheds better