

INTRODUCTION TO CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND LEGISLATION



The agenda of the present Government is based on an integrated approach to economic, social, environmental and foreign policy. It is the policy of the Government to promote sustainable development as an integral component of decision making at all levels of our society.

As recognized in, "Creating Opportunity", the environmental agenda can no longer be separated from the national economic agenda. The federal government, across all departments, must act on this understanding by adopting economic and environmental agendas that converge. It must show leadership and accountability in integrating environmental and economic decisions.

The following highlights the Government's agenda for creating a healthy environment:

- Conduct a comprehensive baseline study of federal taxes, grants, and subsidies to identify barriers to sound environmental practices. This will be supported by efforts to promote research, development, and implementation of: clean energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy use, sustainable management of resources and the protection of bio-diversity;
- Establishment of a Task Force involving government, industry and environmental non-governmental organizations (NGO's) to identify barriers and disincentives to sound environmental practices, and to find effective ways to use economic instruments to protect the environment. This was by the Minister of Finance in the recent Budget;
- Support the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in addressing the proposal in "Creating Opportunity" to appoint an Environmental Auditor General, reporting directly to Parliament, with powers of investigation similar those of the Auditor General. This office would report annually to the public on how successfully federal programs and spending are supporting the shift to sustainable development;
- Announcement by the Minister of the Environment that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) will be proclaimed by introducing the necessary implementing regulations, including a Projects Outside of Canada Regulation (POC). The POC regulation is being developed in consultation with DFAIT, CIDA, and others. Consideration is also being given to amending CEAA to give the Act broader and more binding application, to provide intervenor funding, and to streamline the environmental assessment process; and
- Other initiatives which are in the development stage, including a comprehensive review of Canada's commitment to sustainable development. Further, a report will be prepared in the next two years concerning funding of the Green Plan.

CANADA'S GREEN PLAN

The Green Plan for Canada was developed and approved by Cabinet in 1990 and will be implemented over the next five years. It is the most important environmental action plan ever produced in Canada. Its key elements are:

- Clean air, water and land;
- Sustainable use of renewable resources;
- Protection of our special spaces and species;
- Preserving the integrity of our North;