



CANADA - UNITED STATES

Acid Rain

Canada's Acid Rain Control Program

In March 1985, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced that Canada would implement a comprehensive acid rain control program. The objectives of the program are essentially threefold. First, the Canadian house must be in order if Canada is to expect the United States to take action. Second, Canadian emission reductions will reduce some of the acid rain damage occurring in Canada. And, third, Canada has a responsibility to eliminate any damage it is contributing to in the northeastern United States.

Canada's acid rain control program and Canada's demands for reductions in the U.S. transboundary flow of acid rain pollutants are based on a scientifically derived environmental objective. Based on extensive observations of acid fallout levels and resulting damages in eastern Canada, Canadian scientists have found that damage occurs in vulnerable areas when acid fallout (measured as wet sulphate) exceeds 18 pounds per acre per year (20 kilograms per hectare). They have also determined that when acid fallout drops below this threshold number, damage does not occur and recovery of the environment starts to take place. Canada's objective is to reduce acid fallout in all vulnerable areas to less than 18 pounds per acre per year. This objective is also consistent with observations and studies of the effects of acid fallout in Europe and the United States.

Canadian scientists have gone through the calculations to determine how many tonnes of sulphur dioxide can be emitted into the atmosphere and from what areas in order to achieve the 18-pound-per-acre-per-year objective. (One metric tonne equals 1.1 ton.) They reached two conclusions: First, total annual sulphur-dioxide emissions from the Saskatchewan/Manitoba border eastward must be reduced to 2.3 million tonnes per year (about 50 percent of the 1980 allowable level). Second, the transboundary flow of sulphur dioxide from the United States into eastern Canada must be reduced to about 2 million tonnes per year (again, about 50 percent of the 1980 level).



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