



Committee Meeting Date: February 9, 2005
GVRD Board Meeting Date: February 25, 2005

To: Planning and Environment Committee

From: John Newhook, Senior Engineer
Shelina Sidi, Project Engineer
Policy and Planning Department

Date: January 14, 2005

Subject: **Canada – US Air Quality Agreement**

Recommendation:

That the Board:

- a) support the International Joint Commission's (IJC) efforts to move forward in a bi-lateral context on particulate matter (PM) and request that the Commission give the same consideration to air quality issues identified in the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound (GB-PS) as have been given to the eastern regions of Canada and the United States, and
- b) send a copy of this report titled "Canada-US Air Quality Agreement," dated January 14, 2005, to the Secretaries of the IJC for the United States and Canada.

1. PURPOSE

To provide the Board with information on the progress of the implementation of the Canada-US Air Quality Agreement, and to recommend a response to the letter to the GVRD from the Chair of the Canadian Section of the International Joint Commission, inviting comments on the 2004 Progress Report on that Agreement (Attachment 1).

2. CONTEXT

Recognizing the significance of transboundary effects of air pollution, Canada and the U.S. signed the Canada-US Air Quality Agreement (referred to as the Agreement hereafter) in March 1991. The Agreement was designed primarily to reduce acidic deposition in the eastern parts of Canada and the U.S. by reducing sulphur oxide (SO_x) and nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions (Acid Rain Annex #1). In December 2000, an "Ozone Annex" was added to the Agreement to address excessive ground level ozone concentrations in the eastern regions of the two countries (specifically, south and central Ontario and Quebec, in Canada) after joint scientific studies showed increasing evidence of the regional transport of ozone. As a result, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were added to the list of pollutants to be addressed.

The Agreement has been successful in addressing transboundary air pollution problems in the eastern parts of the two countries. The IJC reports biennially on the progress of implementing the Agreement. Its 2004 Progress Report indicates that both countries have made progress in decreasing

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their NO_x, VOC and SO_x emissions. Under the Acid Rain Annex, eastern Canada has primarily reduced its NO_x and SO_x emissions from electricity generation plants, major combustion sources (such as cement plants) and metal smelting operations. Canada is on target for meeting its commitments under the Ozone Annex by reducing NO_x and VOC emissions from onroad vehicles and nonroad engines used in construction and agriculture operations. Under Canada's harmonization policy, Environment Canada is implementing regulations that will align Canadian vehicle and engine emission standards with those of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

In May 2004, the Board received a staff report titled "Georgia Basin-Puget Sound International Strategy." GVRD staff have been significantly involved in the development of this strategy, which is being led by Environment Canada and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. One of the stated objectives of this strategy is "to work collaboratively to address present and future air quality issues and to resolve pressing air quality issues in the region in a timely manner" (Attachment #2). On July 23, 2004, the Board wrote to the Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of the Environment requesting that the Government of Canada give serious consideration to establishing an appropriate Annex under the Canada-US Air Quality Agreement to address air quality and health concerns in the Lower Fraser Valley Airshed, especially regarding fine particulate matter. In response, the Minister indicated that the information on transboundary flow of Particulate Matter (PM) and other pollutants presented to senior air quality management officials of both governments on June 10, 2004 will help provide the foundation for negotiations for a PM Annex under the Agreement. No mention was made regarding the designation of the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound (GP-PS) airshed as a formal emission management area under the Agreement. However, the IJC 2004 Progress Report indicates that the conclusions of the joint transboundary PM study¹ will provide a basis for moving forward in a bilateral context with priority given to the eastern regions of the two countries and due consideration given to issues identified in the GB-PS airshed.

The GVRD is in the process of updating its 1994 Air Quality Management Plan. Our most recent emission inventory and forecast indicates that in future, emissions of primary particulate matter (including diesel PM) and pollutants such as sulphur oxides and ammonia which contribute to secondary fine particulate formation are expected to rise. The forecast also shows that a lot of these increased emissions are "international" in nature, and are emitted from sources beyond the GVRD's direct regulatory control (such as from marine vessels and agriculture operations). In addition, there have been recent proposals to build large power plants close to the BC/Washington border. These issues suggest that any improvement in regional air quality will require the close cooperation of both countries.

3. ALTERNATIVES

1. The Board could:

- a) support the International Joint Commission's (IJC) efforts to move forward in a bi-lateral context on particulate matter (PM) and request that the Commission give the same consideration to air quality issues identified in the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound (GB-PS) as have been given to the eastern regions of Canada and the United States, and
- b) send a copy of this report titled "Canada-US Air Quality Agreement," dated January 14, 2005, to the Secretaries of the IJC for the United States and Canada.

2. The Board could decide not to take any further action on this issue.

¹ Transboundary Transport, Trends in and Analysis of Fine Inhalable Particles in the Transboundary Region: Science Assessment, Canada-US Air Quality Committee, November 2004.

4. CONCLUSION

The GVRD's emission inventory and forecast indicates that in future, emissions of primary particulate matter (including diesel PM) and pollutants such as sulphur oxides and ammonia which contribute to secondary fine particulate formation are expected to rise. The forecast also shows that a lot of these increased emissions are "international" in nature, and are emitted from sources beyond the GVRD's direct regulatory control. The IJC giving due consideration to air quality issues in the GB-PS airshed could lead to strong federal support, supplementing the Board's efforts to improve air quality and health in the GVRD.

Attachments:

1. Letter from Honourable Herb Gray, Secretary of the IJC Canadian Section, to the Manager of the GVRD Policy and Planning, Mr. Ken Cameron dated December 13, 2004.
2. Statement of Intent on the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy signed by Environment Canada and the EPA, August 22, 2002

International Joint Commission
Canada and United States

The Rt. Hon. Herb Gray, P.C., C.C., Q.C.
Chair, Canadian Section



Commission mixte internationale
Canada et États-Unis

Le très hon. Herb Gray, C.P., C.C., C.R.
Président, Section canadienne

December 13, 2004

Mr. Ken Cameron
Manager, Policy & Planning
Greater Vancouver Regional District
4330 Kingsway
Burnaby, British Columbia
V5H 4G8

Dear Mr. Cameron:

You are invited to provide comments to the International Joint Commission (IJC) on the 2004 Progress Report of the governments' Air Quality Committee under the Canada-United States Air Quality Agreement. Article IX of the 1991 Agreement directs the IJC to invite public comment on each progress report, to prepare a synthesis of the comments received, and to release the synthesis to the public after submitting it to the two governments.

In response to long-standing concerns over acid rain and other transboundary air pollution issues, the United States and Canada signed the Air Quality Agreement in 1991. Since that time, the two federal governments have striven to reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, to improve emissions monitoring, to share scientific information and to address other cooperative commitments under the Agreement. The governments issue a progress report every two years.

The 2004 Progress Report indicates that the Air Quality Committee took into account public comments received through the International Joint Commission's comment process on the 2002 Progress Report. The report highlights actions taken over the past two years to meet ozone and acid rain commitments and discusses key scientific and technical trends related to air pollution. The report concludes that both the United States and Canada have continued to fulfill their obligations set forth in the Agreement and that human health and the environment have benefited greatly from the progress made. It indicates that transboundary particulate matter transport has become an issue of interest and the conclusions of a joint scientific report on this topic are summarized in the Progress Report.

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A copy of the 2004 Progress Report is enclosed. It is also available online at one of the following two web sites: <http://www.ega.gov/airmarkets/usca/2004report.html> or http://www.ec.gc.ca/pdb/can_us/2004CanUs/intro_e.html.

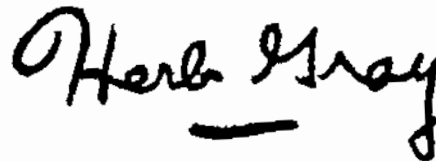
Your comments on the Progress Report would be appreciated. Please send them to one of the following addresses by February 28, 2005:

Ms Elizabeth Bourget
Secretary, United States Section
International Joint Commission
1250 23rd Street, N.W., Suite 100
Washington, DC 20440
Fax: (202) 467-0746
Email: Commission@washington.ijc.org

Mr. Murray Clamen
Secretary, Canadian Section
International Joint Commission
234 Laurier Avenue West, 22nd Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6K6
Fax: (613) 993-5583
Email: Commission@ottawa.ijc.org

If you have any questions on the comment process, please contact Mr. Nick Heister at (613) 992-8367.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Herb Gray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

The Rt. Hon. Herb Gray, P.C., C.C., Q.C.

**STATEMENT OF INTENT
BETWEEN
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT OF CANADA AND
THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
ON A GEORGIA BASIN-PUGET SOUND INTERNATIONAL AIRSHED STRATEGY**

Preamble

- High quality air is essential to the well being of the ecosystems and the physical and cultural health of the people, and the economies of the Puget Sound and Georgia Basin.
- Canada and the United States share an airshed and collectively seek healthy air quality.
- The national and regional economies of Canada and the United States are interdependent, creating a need to ensure that the public policies and regulatory frameworks in both countries are complementary.

Objectives

The Department of Environment of Canada and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (hereinafter referred to as "the participants") hereby declare our intent to protect the air in the Puget Sound and Georgia Basin region, as follows:

- To work collaboratively to address present and future air quality issues and to resolve pressing air quality issues in the region in a timely manner.
- To carry out this work in a manner consistent with the efforts being taken under existing transboundary agreements and mechanisms such as the *Canada-United States Statement of Cooperation on the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound Ecosystem*, the *United States-Canada Air Quality Agreement*, and the *British Columbia-Washington State Environmental Cooperation Council*.
- To work at resolving the most pressing issues which include but may not be limited to:
 - growing concern about the links between air quality and human health;
 - increasing reliance on fossil fuels for the production of energy within the region;
 - land use patterns and transportation systems that rely increasingly on inefficient uses of fossil fuels; and
 - increases in total loading of pollutants on the region's airshed as a result of continued industrial, commercial and residential development and population growth.
- To cooperate in the development of a Georgia Basin - Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy (Strategy) to guide actions to address the issues, encourage efforts to understand and manage air quality and foster the stewardship of this critical natural resource.
- To improve the basis for collaboration by taking a variety of actions, including but not limited to the following:


- developing compatible approaches to emission inventories, air quality monitoring and atmospheric modeling to provide a common basis of knowledge;
- characterizing conditions in the airshed to assist in the further identification of key air quality issues and the development of action programs;
- developing a clearinghouse for best practices; and
- assuring notification and exchange of information on projects that are likely to have transboundary impacts.

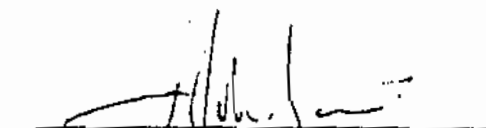
Procedures

- The Participants intend to:
 - involve Provincial, State and Local governments, Regional Air Quality Authorities, the private sector, academia, and non-government organizations in this initiative;
 - develop and implement work plans to give effect to this Statement of Intent; and
 - meet on a regular basis to review progress.
- Environment Canada intends to involve the Aboriginal people of the Georgia Basin.
- U.S. EPA intends to involve affected federally recognized tribes consistent with the EPA Indian Policy as issued in 1984 and reaffirmed most recently on July 11, 2001 by Administrator Christine Todd Whitman.

Signatures

- The signing of this Statement of Intent, reflects our intention to work collaboratively with all interested stakeholders to address present and future air quality issues in the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound region.
- Done in *Seattle*, in two copies, this *22nd* day of *August*, 2002, in the English and French languages, each version being equally valid.


 For the Department of
 Environment of Canada
 Pacific & Yukon Region


 For the US Environmental Protection
 Agency
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