

The new *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*

The new CEPA and Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Sources of Pollution

Further information:

Internet:

Additional information on the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* is available on Environment Canada's Green Lane on the Internet at: www.ec.gc.ca/cepa

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Who protects Canada's marine environment?

The protection of the marine environment in Canada is a responsibility shared by all levels of government. Protection is already under way through a number of initiatives, and others are being developed. The CEPA 1999 provisions are intended to complement existing regulatory measures.

What is marine pollution?

The major threats to the health, productivity and biodiversity of the marine environment result from human activities on land — in coastal areas and further inland. About 80% of the pollution load in the oceans originates from land-based activities. This includes municipal, industrial and agricultural wastes and run-off, as well as atmospheric deposition. These contaminants affect the most productive areas of the marine environment, including estuaries and near-shore coastal waters.

The following definitions are included in Part 7, Division 2 of CEPA 1999:

- “land-based sources” — these refer to point and diffuse sources on land that release substances or energy to the sea by water, through the air or directly from the coast. They include any sources under the sea bed that come from land by tunnel, pipeline or other means.

- “marine pollution” — the substances or energy introduced into the sea by humans, directly or indirectly, that result or may result in:
 - (a) hazards to human health;
 - (b) harm to living resources or marine ecosystems;
 - (c) damage to amenities; or
 - (d) interference with other legitimate uses of the sea.

What's New?

To help complement existing regulatory measures, the Minister of the Environment may issue environmental objectives, guidelines and codes of practice to prevent and reduce marine pollution from land-based sources. This is done after consultation with any other affected Minister.

Keeping in mind the reality of shared responsibility, and the cost-effectiveness of building on existing programmes, Environment Canada is working with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the provinces and the territories, to develop a National Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities. The focus is to prevent pollution from land-based sources and protect habitat in the nearshore or coastal zone.

Canada's National Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (NPA) will respond to an international call to protect the

marine environment through co-ordinated actions at local, regional, national and global levels. It also responds to Canadians who expect clean oceans and sustainable development.

Canada's goals under the NPA are to:

- protect human health;
- reduce the degradation of the marine environment;
- remediate damaged areas;
- promote the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources; and
- maintain the productive capacity and biodiversity of the marine environment.

