

# Backgrounder Document d'information



Ministry of  
the Environment

Ministère de  
l'Environnement

February 17, 2006

## SUPPORT FOR ONTARIO FILING COMMENTS WITH THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

“Smog does not respect international borders, neither do the ill effects. We know that smog can contribute directly to cardiac and respiratory illnesses that can result in death and without a real commitment to cleaning up the air, people will continue to pay the ultimate price - with their lives.”

*Dr. Greg Flynn, President  
Ontario Medical Association  
Toronto, Ontario*

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“Emissions from U.S. sources are responsible for between 50 and 90 per cent of the air pollution that blankets Toronto on smog days and coal-fired power plants in the mid-western United States are the worst offenders. We support Minister Broten's position and urge the EPA to withdraw its changes and protect the health of all residents in the affected areas.”

*His Worship David Miller, Mayor  
City of Toronto, Ontario*

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“During the 1980's, Ontario's role in the acid rain debate was vital. Ontario's intervention today is no less significant. Hopefully the Bush administration will heed Minister Broten's concerns and put clean air ahead of politics.”

*John M. Stanton, Vice President  
National Environmental Trust  
Washington, D.C.*

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“We fully support Minister Broten's submission to the U.S. EPA and join her in calling on the US EPA Administrator not to proceed with the new proposed rules under its New Source Review Program. Transboundary air pollution not only affects the health of the people in the Great Lakes basin, it also affects the water quality of the Great Lakes.

Ontario's submission makes a compelling case that the proposed new rules would be a step backwards in controlling dangerous emissions from coal fired power plants. It also reinforces the wisdom of Ontario's choice to phase out coal.”

*Paul Muldoon, Executive Director  
Canadian Environmental Law Association  
Toronto, Ontario*

“World Wildlife Fund is urging the U.S. government to reduce carbon pollution of which the power sector is the single largest source. We welcome Ontario's commitment to phasing out dirty coal plants and deliver clean energy solutions at home. 2005 was a record year for global warming, with devastating impacts on nature and people. Canada is already feeling the heat, so across the border pressure is entirely appropriate.”

*Hans Verolme, Director, Climate Change Program  
World Wildlife Fund  
Washington, D.C.*

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“Toronto Public Health supports the Government of Ontario’s submission urging the EPA to abandon the proposed weakening of the NSR rule and begin to vigorously enforce the NSR program under the Clean Air Act.”

*David McKeown MDCM, MHSc, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health  
Toronto Public Health Unit  
Toronto, Ontario*

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“We welcome Minister Broten’s and the Province of Ontario’s objections to the latest Bush administration attack on clean air protections covering coal-fired power plant pollution. Ontario has lodged a powerful indictment of dirty air policies in the United States that threaten the health of Canadians and Americans alike.”

*John Walke, Director, Clean Air Program  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Washington, D.C.*

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“We support and appreciate any steps the higher levels of government take to improve our air quality and look forward to watching this action unfold. We also look forward to working with the Ministry of Environment on further actions to improve the environment of Windsor and Essex County.”

*Ron Elliott, Coordinator  
Windsor Essex County Environment Committee  
Windsor, Ontario*

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“The link between transboundary air pollution and health effects is clearer than ever before. Any reductions in transboundary emissions will contribute to the health and well-being of Ontarians and I fully endorse the Ontario government's initiative.”

*Dr. Brian E. McCarry, Departmental Chair  
McMaster University Department of Chemistry  
Stephen A. Jarislowsky Chair in Environment and Health  
Chair, Clean Air Hamilton  
Hamilton, Ontario*

“Pollution Probe completely supports the Government of Ontario’s intervention in the New Source Review Program proposal by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

We urge the U.S. EPA to reconsider its NSR proposal to ensure that the people of Ontario are protected from transboundary air pollution.

Pollution Probe has been concerned about U.S. coal plant emissions for the past decade. And we applaud the leadership by Ontario in reducing smog emissions, in particular by moving off of coal-fired electricity generation.”

*Ken Ogilvie, Executive Director  
Pollution Probe  
Ottawa, Ontario*

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“Air quality is one of the predominant environmental challenges facing governments today. Air pollution causes widespread health effects, leading to extensive hospital admissions and premature deaths. The Ontario Medical Association estimates that in Ontario alone, air pollution causes tens of thousands of hospital visits and thousands of premature deaths each year.

Most of the air pollution affecting Ontario residents comes from the Midwestern states in the U.S. Cross border cooperation is clearly essential to effectively address this problem. Sustainable solutions must focus on innovation, new technologies and collaboration within a framework of appropriate legislation, standards and incentives. In this context, Ontario's submission to the U.S. EPA builds on the past history of successful acid rain collaboration, and looks to the future of a cleaner, healthier environment for people living on both sides of the border. The report presents a compelling analysis of the sources of the problem, the impacts, and the changes required to address it.

I commend Minister Broten for her vision, and urge the EPA Administrator not to proceed with the proposed new rules which would constitute an enormous backward step with devastatingly negative consequences.”

*Dr. David V. J. Bell  
Member of the National Round Table on Environment and Economy  
Professor Emeritus and Former Dean  
Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University  
Toronto, Ontario*

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“Ontario’s Environment Minister Laurel Broten should be congratulated on today’s submission to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency with respect to its proposal to roll back almost thirty years of air pollution control laws.

New Brunswick and Ontario have joined together often in the past to fight for tougher air pollution and acid rain laws in the United States. Our citizens, after all, both sit at the end of North American’s tailpipe.

I hope New Brunswick’s Environment Minister will join Minister Broten in advocating for clean air and environmental protection with our American neighbours.”

*David Coon, Policy Director  
Conservation Council of New Brunswick  
Fredericton, New Brunswick*

“For too long, Canadian governmental leadership on pollution has been sorely lacking. This Ontario government initiative to protect the environment and human health is very welcome and, we hope, marks an important turning point in the fight for clean air.”

*Dr. Rick Smith, Executive Director  
Environmental Defence Canada  
Toronto, Ontario*

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“This backward step in air policy will have serious implications on the public and environmental health of Ontario and all downwind jurisdictions. I applaud Minister Broten and the provincial government for taking a stand on behalf of everyone affected by transboundary air pollution.”

*Dr. L. David Pengelly, Ph.D., P.Eng.  
Associate Clinical Professor, Department of Medicine, McMaster University  
Associate Professor, Department of Medicine, University of Toronto  
Professor Emeritus, Department of Engineering Physics, McMaster University  
Hamilton, Ontario*

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“The U.S. EPA's proposed modifications to the new source rule would be a major step backwards in federal policy on air quality in the United States. The Government of Ontario's response reflects the seriousness of the implications for the health and environment of the province's residents of the EPA's proposals.”

*Mark Winfield, Director, Environmental Governance  
The Pembina Institute  
Toronto, Ontario*

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“As President and CEO of the New Brunswick Lung Association, I fully support strengthening, not weakening, the New Source Review component of the U.S. Clean Air Act. This vital piece of legislation must not be weakened and must not be changed along the lines now up for consideration. I congratulate Ontario's Minister of Environment for this submission to the U.S. EPA. The environmental and health science in Ontario's submission is clear. It documents how a significant amount of Ontario's smog originates from emission sources in the United States.

New Brunswick, too, suffers from the import of air pollution from American sources. Minister Broten's leadership in Ontario serves not only the public health interests of people in her province, but indeed, all people down wind of toxic emissions from power plants.

To protect the health of New Brunswick, the Administrator of the U.S. EPA must not allow NSR to be weakened as proposed. We fully agree with the submission prepared by Ontario. The Administrator must ensure that this key piece of the Clean Air Act is left intact and is effectively enforced.”

*Kenneth Maybee, President and CEO  
New Brunswick Lung Association  
Fredericton, New Brunswick*

“Sierra Legal Defence Fund applauds the Ontario government for taking action to oppose the U.S. EPA proposal to roll back provisions that protect people in the Great Lakes area from harmful emissions to air.

Sierra Legal has itself filed a petition with the U.S. EPA that may lead to court action if the agency does not act to reduce emission of pollutant from U.S. coal fired plants that endanger the health and welfare of Canadians.

The Ministers' decision to file this submission adds an authoritative voice in harmony with those across the border that are being raised against health threatening transboundary air pollution.”

*Robert V. Wright, Counsel & Managing Lawyer  
Sierra Legal Defence Fund  
Toronto, Ontario*

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“To maximize the public health benefits of Ontario's coal phase out we must also reduce the pollution that comes to us from U.S. coal plants. This McGuinty Government initiative addresses the cross-border component of Ontario's effort to reduce air pollution and save lives.”

*Dan McDermott, Director, Ontario Chapter  
Sierra Club of Canada  
Toronto, Ontario*

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