


ENVIRONMENTAL

POLICY

OF THE MINISTÈRE

DES TRANSPORTS

DU QUÉBEC

Québec 

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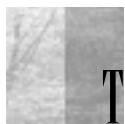
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FOREWORD



The environment policy the ministère des Transports du Québec has adopted results from an awareness of the importance of the environment that has grown within the Department since the early 1970s. It places the MTQ at the forefront of environmental protection in its various fields of activity.

This policy flows from the strategic plan developed by Transports Québec for all its activities and is an integral part of its mission. It also contributes to the Department's efforts to achieve its total quality objectives. In short, it confirms the importance the Department places on the environment and puts an official stamp on the environmental option by emphasizing sustainable development.

Overall, the effect of this new policy is to broaden and enhance the Department's environmental practices. Concern for the impact of transportation on the environment and land use will be an on-going feature of Transports Québec policies and programs. The ecological, cultural and social heritage will be given a higher profile in its activities. The Department will intensify its environmental monitoring activities to improve its knowledge and understanding of the effects of its activities on the environment. Finally, to satisfy the expectations and concerns of a wide variety of users, the Department will promote public information and consultation.

The implementation of this policy concerns everyone. It requires the cooperation of all the Department's employees and its partners, in order to be converted into practical action.

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INTRODUCTION



The environment is: “the water, atmosphere and soil or a combination of any of them or, generally, the ambient milieu with which living species have dynamic relations”¹.

The ministère des Transports du Québec and the environment

Humankind maintains a dynamic relationship with the environment through its way of life. Modes of transport, as elements of support, are inextricably linked to ways of life and contribute significantly to economic development. They also generate changes in natural and human environments, which must be identified, evaluated and managed.

For 20 years, the ministère des Transports du Québec has been concerned by environmental questions related to its mandate. Numerous environmental studies, research and assessments have been carried out as part of projects to develop, improve and maintain infrastructures, whether or not they are required under environmental legislation.

To respond as adequately as possible to the expectations and concerns of the Québec community in regard to resource preservation and environmental improvement, the ministère des Transports decided to adopt a transportation-related environmental policy, in keeping with the Department’s general strategic planning.

The purpose of the policy is to define the areas in which the ministère des Transports can intervene most effectively while helping to achieve the government’s environmental objectives. The policy constitutes recognition of the Department’s environmental responsibilities, and is therefore a formal commitment to incorporate the protection of resources and of the living environment into its policies, programs and activities.

¹ *Environment Quality Act*,
chapter Q-2, section 1.

Sustainable development

The environmental policy of the ministère des Transports du Québec is based on the concept of sustainable development.

This concept grew out of the work of the World Commission on Environment and Development, also known as the Brundtland Commission. Created by the United Nations General Assembly in 1983, the Commission declared "... that it is possible to build a future that is more prosperous, more just, and more secure because it rests on policies and practices that serve to expand and sustain the ecological basis of development²".

In this context, the concept of sustainable development is defined as "...a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs³".

The Commission's work culminated in the formulation of proposed general principles, rights and responsibilities for the protection of the environment and sustainable development. These stipulate that:

- "All human beings have the fundamental right to an environment adequate for their health and well-being."
- "States shall conserve and use the environmental and natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations."
- "States shall maintain ecosystems and ecological processes essential for the functioning of the biosphere, shall preserve biological diversity, and shall observe the principle of optimum sustainable yield in the use of living natural resources and ecosystems."
- "States shall establish adequate environmental protection standards and monitor changes in and publish relevant data on environmental quality and resource use."
- "States shall make or require prior environmental assessments of proposed activities which may significantly affect the environment or use of a natural resource."

² *Our Common Future*, World Commission on Environment and Development, 1988, p. 356.

³ *Ibid*, p. 9.

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- “States shall inform in a timely manner all persons likely to be significantly affected by a planned activity and to grant them equal access and due process in administrative and judicial proceedings.”
 - “States shall ensure that conservation is treated as an integral part of the planning and implementation of development activities and provide assistance to other States, especially to developing countries, in support of environmental protection and sustainable development.”
 - “States shall cooperate in good faith with other States in implementing the preceding rights and obligations⁴.”

These principles correspond to the objectives that the ministère des Transports has set for itself with a view to achieving sustainable development.

⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 348-349.

OBJECTIVES



The ministère des Transports du Québec intends to integrate the environmental dimension into its policies, programs and activities, and to make it a necessary component of any decision making. The policy specifies the commitments of the Department in regard to the protection of resources and the improvement of the environment.

The objectives of the policy are:

- to define the environmental responsibility of the ministère des Transports;
- to pinpoint the areas in which the ministère des Transports intends to take steps to protect and improve the environment and the quality of life;
- to advise the managers and employees of the Department whose decisions and actions have an impact on the environment;
- to play a leadership role in the transportation-related environmental field;
- to provide a framework for the preparation and evaluation of the Department's policies, programs and activities.

STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLES AND MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF EACH PRINCIPLE



The actions of the ministère des Transports du Québec are in keeping with the protection of resources and the improvement of the environment and the quality of life. They are based on the concept of sustainable development.

PRINCIPLE I: *Environmental responsibilities*

The Department plans, designs and carries out its mandates and activities with the environment in mind. It assumes its share of responsibility in resolving transportation-related environmental problems.

MEANS

- Integrate environmental considerations into the process of choosing modes of transport, into budgetary choices and into the planning and design of projects and programs.
- Seek harmony between technical and environmental considerations.
- Draft environmental standards, guides and rules to support the Department's projects.
- Conduct environmental assessments with a view to preserving the balance of ecosystems, ecological processes and biological diversity.
- Integrate all the components of the natural and human environments into the environmental assessment process.
- Apply restoration, mitigation or compensation measures to improve or develop the environment and prepare action plans for this purpose.
- Provide for environmental monitoring of Department projects and for their supervision.
- Reduce noise and other forms of pollution generated by the construction, use and maintenance of transportation infrastructures.
- Favour recycling and recovery in the Department's activities.

PRINCIPLE II: *Safety and public health*

The Department plans, designs, builds and maintains transportation infrastructures and systems according to safety policies, rules and standards aimed at protecting users, those nearby and the environment.

MEANS

- Step up research aimed at identifying and reducing environmental risks.
- Make users of transportation infrastructures and systems aware of safe attitudes and behaviour.
- Ensure the safety of users and those nearby in designing transportation infrastructures.
- Take into consideration problems of contaminated soil and the transport of dangerous materials when projects are designed.
- Safely manage the traffic of vehicles transporting dangerous materials.

PRINCIPLE III: *Land use*

The Department recognizes the structural effect of transportation networks on land use planning and development.

MEANS

- Participate in discussions and decisions about land use choices and objectives.
- Improve interaction between the Department and the agencies responsible for managing and planning transport.
- Identify and take into account the distinctive characteristics of the environments affected by Department action.
- Design transportation infrastructures with a view to favouring the development of the living environment.

PRINCIPLE IV: *Energy*

Through its decisions and activities, the Department aims to reduce energy consumption and related negative environmental effects.

MEANS

- Promote the use of high performance modes of transport, i.e. mass transportation of people and rail and maritime transport of goods.
- Develop, in cooperation with the parties involved, regulatory measures to reduce or eliminate toxic emissions attributable to transport.
- Step up research into energy sources and substitute fuels.
- Improve the complementarity of the various modes of transport.
- Improve the energy efficiency of the Department's equipment and buildings.

PRINCIPLE V: *Relations with the public*

The Department objectively and consistently consults the individuals, groups and organizations involved and informs them of its policies and projects.

MEANS

- Provide mechanisms for public participation in all stages of projects that may alter the living environment.
- Broaden present cooperation and consultation practices.
- Prepare and implement an environmental education program.
- Inform the public of the environmental impact of the use of the various modes of transport.
- Disseminate the information generated by and the results of public consultations.

PRINCIPLE VI: *Research and development*

The Department favours transportation-related environmental research and development.

MEANS

- Boost efforts to gain knowledge of and manage environmental problems linked to transportation.
- Prepare progress reports on the transportation-related environmental situation.
- Disseminate and apply the findings of transportation-related environmental research.
- Favour collaboration and exchanges between the various transportation-related environmental research circles.

PRINCIPLE VII: *Legislation*

The Department participates in the development of transportation-related environmental legislation.

MEANS

- Accurately inform the entire staff of the Department and its partners about the application of laws, regulations and policies.
- Contribute, along with the other parties in the environmental field, to the drafting, clarification and concordance of statutes, regulations and policies.