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Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management  
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency

**CANADA, BRITISH COLUMBIA SIGN AGREEMENT  
ON ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT COOPERATION**

VICTORIA – The Canada-British Columbia Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation was signed today by Canada's Minister of the Environment, the Honourable David Anderson, and British Columbia's Minister of Sustainable Resource Management, George Abbott.

Under the bilateral agreement, projects that require a review under both federal and provincial environmental assessment legislation will undergo a single, cooperative assessment, meeting the legal requirements of both governments while maintaining their respective existing roles and responsibilities.

“Cooperative environmental assessments will ensure more effective assessments and improve environmental protection,” said Minister Anderson. “This Agreement will reduce overlap and duplication and allow both governments to allocate public resources more efficiently.”

“Streamlining these processes and minimizing the regulatory burden is important to the province because it means efficient and thorough consideration of proposals, and reduced costs for applicants,” Minister Abbott said. “Agreements like this are part of our commitment to simplifying procedures and cutting red tape in British Columbia.”

The draft agreement was subject to public consultation for a 30-day period from December 15, 2003 to January 14, 2004. Public comments were considered in the preparation of the final text.

This bilateral agreement translates into a specific operating plan that incorporates the principles of the 1998 Canada-Wide Accord on Environmental Harmonization and the Sub-Agreement on Environmental Assessment. The agreement provides for periodic review of its implementation and effectiveness, and a thorough evaluation within five years.

The 1997 agreement between British Columbia and Canada expired on April 16, 2002 and an interim extension was confirmed in October 2002. The Canada-British Columbia Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation will replace the interim extension.

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Media contact: Gordon Harris  
Senior Communications Advisor  
Canadian Environmental Assessment  
Agency  
613 957-0825

Graham Currie  
Communications Director  
Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management  
250 356-2862

-more-

Paul Scott  
Director, Pacific and Northern Region  
Canadian Environmental Assessment  
Agency  
604 666-6989

Garry Alexander  
Director, Strategic Policy and Planning  
Environmental Assessment Agency  
250 387-9675

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