



# Canada's Clean Air Act





# Cleaner Air Means Healthier Canadians

Canadians consistently rank air pollution among their main environmental concerns. They say that the quality of the air they breathe is an important factor in their quality of life—especially in our major cities. In fact, over half of Canadians live in places where the air quality occasionally falls below acceptable standards.

Air pollution comes from a variety of sources, some of the most important being the combustion of fossil fuels from industries, transportation, and heating. Pollution from these types of sources is not only a problem where it originates. It can travel long distances, and react with other airborne chemicals. In other words, air pollution released in one place can have an impact on communities hundreds and even thousands of kilometres away.

Until recently, smog has been mostly a summer problem. But now it is also becoming a more serious concern in the winter when stagnant conditions can allow a build-up of pollutants in the air. Smog and poor air quality continue to cause thousands of deaths each year and hundreds of thousands of severe episodes of asthma and bronchitis, particularly among children and the elderly. During an average year, exposure to air pollution results in an estimated 60,000 emergency room visits and 17,000 hospital admissions in Ontario alone. It is simply unacceptable that many senior Canadians need to be advised not to leave their homes because of a smog warning.

Canadians are concerned about climate change. Reducing the emissions that cause climate change is also a matter of national concern. After four failed plans and over a decade of inaction, this government will move quickly to respond to the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

This government is deeply committed to delivering tangible results that will improve the health of Canadians and their environment. There is a pressing need for federal regulation of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions—national requirements that will set mandatory targets for emissions that harm the environment. And we must take strong action now.

Canada's New Government has a plan—the Clean Air Regulatory Agenda. This new approach would enable us to establish clear national standards, to move the industry from voluntary compliance to regulations, to monitor progress, and to report to Canadians on the gains that Canada is making in reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.



## A New Approach

### Introduction of *Canada's Clean Air Act*

The first step is the introduction of *Canada's Clean Air Act*. *Canada's Clean Air Act* would strengthen the legislative basis for taking action on reducing air pollution and greenhouse gases. It contains three key elements:

1. The Act would create a new Clean Air Part in the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* (CEPA) to strengthen the government's ability to take action to reduce air emissions.

It would authorize the government to regulate indoor and outdoor air pollutants and greenhouse gases, and require the Ministers of the Environment and Health to establish national air quality objectives, as well as to monitor and report publicly on their attainment. It would also amend CEPA to enable the government to regulate the blending of fuels and their components. This will be an important step towards meeting a 5% renewable fuel content in motor fuels by 2010.

2. It would amend the *Motor Vehicle Fuel Consumption Standards Act* to enhance the Government of Canada's authority to regulate vehicle fuel efficiency. Setting mandatory fuel consumption standards would help ensure reduced greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles purchased in Canada.
3. It would expand authorities under the *Energy Efficiency Act* to allow the government to set energy efficiency standards and labelling requirements for a wider range of consumer and commercial products. Achieving the same comfort and convenience for less energy is one of the most sensible and effective ways to reduce emissions and save money.



## Immediate Action

The Act and subsequent Notice of Intent to Regulate would commit to short, medium and long-term industrial air pollution targets. The Government of Canada will consult and propose regulations for:

### 1. Emissions from Industry

- 🍁 Consultations will start immediately with stakeholders on the key elements of integrated air pollutant and greenhouse gas regulations.
- 🍁 Development of the overall regulatory framework for key industrial sectors including fossil-fuel fired electricity generation, upstream oil and gas, downstream petroleum, base metal smelters, iron and steel, cement, forest products, and chemicals production.

#### Short-term (2010-2015)

- 🍁 For air pollutants: the Government intends to adopt a target-setting approach based on fixed caps.
- 🍁 For greenhouse gases: the Government intends to adopt a target-setting approach based on emissions intensity, one that will yield a better outcome for the Canadian environment than under the plan previously proposed on July 6, 2005 and show real progress on the environment here in Canada.

#### Medium-term (2020-2025)

- 🍁 For air pollutants: the Government will continue to employ a fixed cap approach to target-setting.
- 🍁 For greenhouse gases: the Government will build upon the emissions intensity approach with targets that are ambitious enough to lead to absolute reductions in emissions and thus support the establishment of a fixed cap on emissions during this period.

## Long-term (2050)

- ✻ For air pollutants: the Government will continue to employ a fixed cap approach to target-setting.
- ✻ For greenhouse gases: the Government is committed to achieving an absolute reduction in greenhouse gas emissions between 45 - 65% from 2003 levels by 2050, and will ask the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) for advice on the specific target to be selected and scenarios for how the target could be achieved.

Consultations on the regulatory framework for industrial emissions will include consideration of the compliance options that should be available to industry. One option that will be examined will be a mechanism whereby companies, and potentially governments, could contribute to a technology investment fund that would support the development of transformative technologies for emissions reduction, such as CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration.

In addition, in the coming weeks and months, the government will introduce new regulations, for implementation as early as 2007, pursuant to the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* to address air pollutants from certain products and vehicles:

### **2. Emissions from On-Road and Off-Road Vehicles and Engines**

- ✻ Final regulations to further reduce air pollutant emissions from on-road motorcycles;
- ✻ Amendments to existing regulations further reducing air pollutant emissions from off-road diesel engines and equipment (e.g., those used in construction, mining, forestry, agriculture);
- ✻ New regulations to reduce air pollutant emissions from marine spark-ignition engines and off-road recreational vehicles (e.g., outboards, personal watercraft, snowmobiles, ATVs);
- ✻ New regulations requiring on-board diagnostics systems for on-road heavy duty engines (e.g., heavy trucks, buses); and
- ✻ New regulations to reduce air pollutant emissions from off-road large spark-ignition engines (e.g., forklifts).

### **3. Emissions from Consumer and Commercial Products**

- ✻ Regulations limiting Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) content in: architectural, industrial and maintenance coatings; consumer products; and automobile refinishing coatings (together, paint, cosmetics and cleaning products account for about 18% of VOC emissions in Canada).
- ✻ Regulations to reduce VOC emissions from other consumer and commercial products, including regulations limiting VOC content in additional products such as portable fuel containers; and new strategies and instruments for reducing VOC emissions from printing, aerospace and automotive manufacturing sectors.
- ✻ New regulations under the *Energy Efficiency Act* will set new performance requirements for various consumer and commercial products. Over time, the set of planned new regulations will address about 20 currently unregulated products such as commercial clothes washers and boilers, and will tighten requirements for 10 products such as residential dishwashers and dehumidifiers.

The Government intends to develop measures for improving indoor air quality.

### **4. Indoor air**

- ✻ A new guideline on radon that will be the basis for a national radon strategy.





## Moving Forward

- ✿ Development and implementation of sector-specific regulations for air pollutants and greenhouse gases for the above-mentioned key industrial sectors. The government plans to have emissions regulations finalized by 2010 for all sectors, and the necessary tools to monitor and enforce compliance.
- ✿ Expansion of the number of consumer and commercial products covered by air pollution regulations.
- ✿ Additional measures to improve indoor air quality including identification and stricter regulation of a wider range of products that have negative impacts on indoor air quality.
- ✿ Regulations on fuel consumption of road motor vehicles under the *Motor Vehicle Fuel Consumption Standards Act*, as amended by the proposed *Canada's Clean Air Act*, so as to achieve sustained improvements in fuel efficiency after the expiry of a voluntary agreement with the auto industry in 2010.
- ✿ Minimum energy performance standards for 20 additional products and an increase in the stringency of the standards for 10 currently regulated products. These regulations would address 80% of the energy used in the home and 88% of the energy used in commercial settings.



## Our Commitment to Cleaner Air for Canadians

Protecting the environment is everyone's responsibility. All Canadians and all governments have a role to play. The federal government is doing its part by taking action to ensure that human health and the environment are protected for all Canadians.

The Government of Canada will continue to consult with provinces, territories, industries and Canadians in order to set and reach targets for the reduction of both indoor and outdoor air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions.

Air pollution knows no boundaries. Some of our air pollution comes from other countries, and *Canada's Clean Air Act* and its regulatory agenda would give Canada a credible basis to negotiate reductions in other countries while protecting the health of Canadians and reducing pollution in our own backyard.

We will continue to strive for continuous improvement and progress to protect the health of Canadians and our environment. The time for talk is over. The time for action is now.

**For more information, please contact:**

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