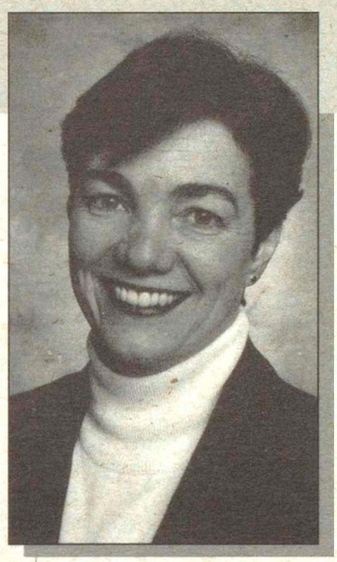
ENVIRONMENT CANADA ACTION PLAN 1995/96 – 1997/98

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to introduce Environment Canada's Action Plan for the period 1995 to 1998. The challenge is to position the department to meet evolving environmental concerns, while continuing to provide quality services despite severe budgetary constraints. Over the past 18 months, we have put in place what I believe to be a very strong foundation for environmental progress over the rest of the decade and beyond. This action plan builds on that progress by outlining key commitments and actions for the next three years, and describes plans for the transition to a more modern, affordable department. I am confident that Environment Canada can both minimize health and safety risks, and contribute to a competitive economy, by focusing clearly on providing international and national leadership on key environmental issues, and by maintaining strong science and enforcement capabilities.

Sheila Copps
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of the Environment



ENVIRONMENT CANADA AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is everyone's business – it is a priority that is being integrated into the mandates of many agencies at all levels of government, and in the private sector.

Environment Canada is a science-based department whose business is to help Canadians live and prosper in an environment that needs to be conserved and protected.

Our over-riding priority is to make sustainable development a reality in Canada. We are committed to giving Canadians the information, tools, rules, and guidance they need to make environmentally responsible decisions.

To do this, our commitment to Canadians is to achieve the following over the next three years:

- **reduce risks to human health and the environment** by: developing national strategies and standards; ensuring that those strategies and standards are vigorously applied; and taking a leadership role in the international community;

- **minimize risks to life and property** by: providing Canadians with timely weather and environmental warnings and reducing the frequency and severity of environmental emergencies;

- **give Canadians the tools to build a greener society** by: providing educational and informational services to Canadians; forming partnerships between governments and industry; and, getting economic and environmental considerations to go hand-in-hand so that economic development is environmentally sensitive and fosters the emergence of Canada's nascent environmental industries as well.

Environment Canada
Environnement Canada

Canada

ACTION PLAN 1995/96 – 1997/98

ENVIRONMENT CANADA

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Reducing Risks to Human Health and to the Environment

Providing Weather Forecasts and Warnings and Emergency Preparedness Services

Giving Canadians the Tools to Build a Greener Society

	Atmospheric Change	Toxics	Enforcement	Biodiversity/ Wildlife	Preserving Canada's Ecosystems	Weather Forecasts and Warnings	Emergency Preparedness	Information Products and Services	Technologies and Know-how	Partnerships
What is the Issue?	Man-made emissions into the atmosphere are leading to increased health risks to Canadians and damage to critical elements of our ecosystems	Certain toxics can build up in tissues of animals and plants to the point where they represent a danger to our health and that of future generations	The enforcement of environmental laws is one of the key elements in protecting our environment	The diversity of plant and animal species is declining globally at an alarming rate	The integration of environmental, social, and economic considerations is critical to dealing with the environmental integrity of major Canadian ecosystems	Significant weather, including severe weather events, have negative and even tragic consequences for life, as well as property and economic prosperity	Accidental releases of polluting substances into air, land, or water may cause adverse effects on human health or the environment	Canadians need to have access to information on and understand environmental issues in order to make responsible environmental, social, and economic decisions	Tools, techniques, and technologies are needed to bridge the gap between knowledge and action	Sustainable development requires a co-operative approach by all sectors of society
Our Commitment to Canadians	We will reduce the negative impacts that humans have on the atmosphere and help Canadians better understand and adapt to the consequences of these impacts	We will protect the environment by controlling and, in some cases, eliminating the use of toxic substances and hazardous wastes	We will enhance the protection of Canada's environment by promoting, and getting, compliance with our laws and regulations	We will promote Canadian and global biodiversity by ensuring that biological resources are used sustainably	We will preserve and protect Canada's ecosystems through strategic partnerships	We will advise and protect Canadians by providing accurate and timely weather forecasts and warnings	We will protect Canadians and their environment by reducing the consequences and severity of human-made environmental emergencies	We will help Canadians integrate environmental thinking into daily decisions	We will give Canadian citizens and businesses the tools to prevent pollution and develop green technologies and know-how that make good environmental and economic sense	We will build partnerships and agreements with business and government; partnerships which improve our environmental actions and agreements which eliminate duplication and overlap
Actions	The overall objective of EC will be to: develop national mitigation and adaptation strategies and standards; and, improve understanding of atmospheric change and its impacts through environmental sciences	The overall objective of EC will be to manage substances of concern through preventive and precautionary approaches, including national standards	The overall objective of EC will be to increase emphasis on innovative ways to achieve results through partnership with other enforcement agencies and co-ordinating enforcement responsibilities with provincial agencies	The overall objective of EC will be to: collaborate nationally and internationally in support of biodiversity/wildlife conservation; and, increase focus on integrated and ecosystem-based approaches	The overall objective of EC will be to: understand and evaluate ecosystem health and stressors; develop indicators of environmental sustainability; and, promote conservation and sustainable use strategies	The overall objective of EC will be to modernize weather warning production and delivery system using the atmospheric sciences, informatics, telecommunications and remote sensing technologies	The overall objective of EC will be to make pollution prevention and improved science and technology central to reducing frequency and severity of environmental emergencies	The overall objective of EC will be to: better understand clients' information needs; and, provide accessible and integrated environmental, social and economic information	The overall objective of EC will be to: provide Canadians with the tools, techniques and technologies to build their capacity; and, foster partnerships allowing a wide range of players to learn better ways to achieve sustainable development	The overall objective of EC will be to make environmental-socio-economic linkages an increasingly important component of decision-making
	• National Action Program on Climate Change evaluated and specific measures identified for federal/provincial discussion; federal action plan developed • Network of cities pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% RESULTS *Canada's greenhouse gas emissions stabilized at 1990 levels by year 2000*	• Federal Toxic Substances Management Policy released by 1995 • Second National Pollutants Release Inventory Report released by March 1996 • Response to Standing Committee review of CEPA by November 1995 • Strategies created for managing CEPA toxics through the strategic options process • Key elements identified of a global action plan for persistent organic pollutants (POPs) for use in United Nations fora in June 1995 RESULTS *Virtual elimination of PBTS and life-cycle management of other toxic substances and hazardous wastes*	• Import and export of endangered species and banned substances are priorities for inspection and investigation in 1995 RESULTS *Respect for environmental laws are increased by publishing the prosecution and conviction of individuals or organizations who are found to be breaking the environmental and wildlife laws*	• Federal legislation introduced for conservation of endangered species in 1995-96 RESULTS *Endangered species recovered and conserved*	• Agreements developed with key sector groups to support ecosystem sustainability RESULTS *Canada's resource-based economic sectors are developed sustainably*	• Production and delivery of weather warnings and forecasts consolidated into 17 Eco-Action offices across Canada to provide a community focus for many Environment Canada services and important points of contact with the public by 1998 • 56 local weather offices phased out by 1998 • Professional meteorologists focus more of their efforts on production of weather warnings and forecasts of significant weather over the next 3 years • Expand weather warning alert system by adding 11 Weatheradio and 6 Weathercopy transmitters by 1996, bringing Weathercopy coverage up to 75% of the Canadian population and Weatheradio coverage to 95% RESULTS *Canadians receive timely and accurate warnings of severe weather*	• Environmental emergencies agreements negotiated with provinces by the end of 1995 RESULTS *Collaborative and harmonized efforts for environmental emergencies*	• Establish a Canadian node on the Green Lane for information exchange on biodiversity, the endangered species program, and the National Pollutants Release Inventory • Third national report on The State of Canada's Environment completed by mid-1996 • Canada's national report to U.N. Commission for Sustainable Development prepared in 1995 RESULTS *Canadians have access to integrated environmental, social and economic information, including comprehensive report on state of Canada's environment*	• Federal Pollution Prevention Strategy released in June 1995 RESULTS *Public and private sectors take joint responsibility for environmental protection through pollution prevention*	• "Greening of Government" by assisting other government departments to adopt state-of-the-art practices • Sustainable Development Framework to guide establishment of sustainable development strategies by all federal departments in 1995 • EC's Sustainable Development Strategy prepared by September 1996 RESULTS *All federal government departments incorporate sustainable development considerations in their policies, programs and operations*
	• Phase out of CFCs and methyl chloroform completed by January 1996 • Continued delivery of UVb forecasts RESULTS *Consumption of ozone-depleting substances stabilized, reduced, or eliminated and stratospheric ozone layer begins to recover*	• CEPA New Substance Notification Regulations for Biotechnology: Microorganisms by July 1995 RESULTS *Federal framework to regulate products of biotechnology*	• Worst offenders receive special attention and strategies developed using one or more federal, provincial, and international organizations for joint operations RESULTS *Environmental laws are applied fairly and in a consistent manner*	• Protocol to amend migratory birds convention to allow for responsive regulation of traditional and other hunting of waterfowl by aboriginal peoples, negotiated with U.S. and ratified in Canada in 1995-96 RESULTS *Migratory bird populations sustained or increased*	• Long-term strategic plan for ecosystem initiatives developed by March 1997 • Review of national activities related to management of freshwater resources and federal role RESULTS *National/international partnerships and strategies promote ecosystems approach*		• Direct meteorological and sea state support provided to environmental emergency response organizations • Timely warnings of pollution events, advice on volcanic and nuclear fallout incidents, and information on dispersion of toxic gas releases provided RESULTS *Deaths, illness and property damage resulting from human-induced hazards reduced or prevented*	• National set of environmental indicators and system to regularly update them completed by December 1996 • In co-operation with private sector and industrial partners, global information system designed to track environmental trends RESULTS *Canadians have ready access to a comprehensive set of environmental indicators for tracking progress and making better decisions in support of sustainable development*	• Nationally consistent and legally sound interventions for environmental assessment public panels RESULTS *Decisions improved through use of environmental assessment*	• Government response provided to Task Force on Economic Instruments and Barriers and Disincentives to Sound Environmental Practices in 1995 • Tax disincentives to secondary material manufacturing addressed in 1996 RESULTS *Barriers to sound environmental practices removed and greater use made of market-based mechanisms*
	• National tracking system implemented to monitor NOx/VOCs control measures and emissions reductions by March 1996 • Continued delivery of smog advisories • National strategy on acid rain developed by April 1997 RESULTS *Emissions of sulphur dioxides, oxides of nitrogen, and volatile organic compounds and levels of smog reduced*	• Computerized tracking system for transboundary movement of hazardous wastes by March 1996 RESULTS *Canada's obligations under Basel Convention, OECD guidelines and Canada-U.S. Agreement on Transboundary Shipment of Hazardous Waste fulfilled*	• Compliance agreements negotiated with willing provinces • Memoranda of Understanding negotiated with several departments (e.g. RCMP, Customs) in delivering enforcement responsibilities RESULTS *Enforcement capacity is strengthened through international co-operation, federal-provincial agreements, and interdepartmental Memoranda of Understanding*	• National and regional biodiversity action plans completed by March 1996 RESULTS *Canadian Biodiversity Strategy implemented*	• Environmental quality assessments completed for 13 ACAP sites • Effluent from 39 targeted plants in the St. Lawrence ecosystem characterized by March 1996 • Plans finalized for remediation of beneficial uses in 17 Great Lakes areas of concern by 1996 • Final report of Northern Rivers Study Board issued • Persistent toxic substances reduced and health of aquatic ecosystems assessed in up to 20 reaches of Fraser River Basin RESULTS *Major national ecosystems restored and protected*	• Through partnerships with media, provinces, and Emergency Preparedness Canada, advise Canadians on how to reduce dangers posed by severe weather RESULTS *Canadians understand how to respond to warnings of severe weather*	• Technologies and new knowledge developed, transferred and commercialized on spill prevention, modelling, measurement, containment, recovery, remediation and disposal RESULTS *Technologies available for prevention, measurement, control and remediation of pollution emergencies*	• Weather, water, and ice services tailored to needs of economic sectors (agriculture, forestry) • Improve client access by linking environmental databases across Canada • Technology to improve accuracy of automated weather forecasts by 1998 • Service standards based on lower-cost program and consultation with clients developed by 1996 RESULTS *Canadians have access to and use timely and accurate information on weather, water, and ice conditions*	• Environmental Choice Guidelines developed for additional 25 product categories in 1995-96 • Environmental management system guidelines and standards (e.g. ISO 14000) completed in 1997-98 RESULTS *Demand for less environmentally stressful products and services intensified, while supply improved*	• Intergovernmental agreement regarding North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) implemented in 1995-96 RESULTS *Canada's trade and environmental policies mutually compatible*
	• National strategy for managing hazardous air pollutants by 1996 • Policies on alternative fuels for federal fleet, vehicle emission control regulations in 1995 RESULTS *Persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals in atmosphere reduced*	• National Contaminated Sites Program completed by March 1996 RESULTS *All federal PCBs in storage destroyed and high-risk contaminated sites cleaned up*		• Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act proclaimed in 1995-96 RESULTS *Legislation implemented to prevent illegal trade in wildlife, protect Canadian ecosystems from harmful introductions, and comply with foreign conservation laws*						• Socio-economic analyses undertaken to support the development of 7 regulations under the CEPA and 2 regulations under the Fisheries Act RESULTS *Environmentally and economically sound response strategies are available to address priority pollution problems*
	• Monitoring and research on risks to ecosystem health from climate change and atmospheric pollutants • 1996 Canadian Acid Rain Deposition Science Assessment Report, new CEPA guidelines on halons, and revised guidelines on CFC recycling • Improved understanding and modelling of atmospheric change • Climatological study of UV radiation completed by 1996 RESULTS *Knowledge of atmospheric processes improved to anticipate and cope with future atmospheric changes*	• Targeted research and science/policy advice on priority pollutants RESULTS *Understanding of toxic chemical impacts on ecosystems improved*	• An electronic enforcement activity tracking system implemented by March 1996 RESULTS *Automated information on enforcement activity is readily available to the public*	• 550,000 hectares of priority habitat added to protected areas network in 1995-96 and NAWMP implemented RESULTS *Wildlife and associated socio-economic cultural benefits sustained through wise use of habitat and ecosystems*	• Co-produce an Arctic Assessment Report with DIAND on sources, pathways, and fate of northern contaminants by January 1996 RESULTS *Effects of toxic chemicals on Arctic ecosystems known*	• Optimize observing networks and systems by automating, choosing more effective observing strategies, and seeking out new data sources; 50 automated observing systems deployed for a total of 99 advanced, automated systems by 1997 RESULTS *Weather conditions are monitored*	• International policy and standards advanced for environmental emergency prevention and preparedness through Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, International Maritime Organization, United Nations committees, and OECD groups, by March 1998 RESULTS *National and international standards to improve environmental emergency capacity*	• Increase commercial revenues by $6 million by FY 1997/98 RESULTS *Industry clients are provided with specialized services on a user-pay basis*	• National solid waste inventory is updated in 1995 RESULTS *35% reduction in packaging waste achieved by 1996*	• Recommendations to make trade and environmental policies mutually supportive, through the Trade and Environment Committee of the WTO • Effectiveness of key international environmental and sustainable development institutes enhanced RESULTS *International institutions more effectively address environmental challenges*

LOOKING BACK: RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

✔ The **national legislative agenda** has been advanced through:

• the proclamation of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and the establishment of an independent Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency;
• the passage of amendments to the *Migratory Birds Convention Act* and the *Canada Wildlife Act* to provide for increased fines, and streamlined enforcement and administrative procedures;
• the introduction of the *Manganese Based Fuel Additives Act*. The bill will prohibit the interprovincial trade and import, for commercial purposes, of MMT and gasoline containing MMT. It will ensure that the most up-to-date equipment used to reduce air pollution will not be jeopardized by components in the fuel;
• the initiation of a Parliamentary Committee Review of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*, in order to recommend how to make it more effective.

✔ Canada played a key **international leadership role** at the Berlin Conference of Parties to the *Climate Change Convention*, by helping broker a consensus on an emissions protocol for developing countries, and on the implementation of pilot projects for the sharing of green technologies; and as a direct result of Canadian interventions, the *North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation* has been established to monitor and report on the environmental impacts of NAFTA.

✔ The **national policy agenda** has been advanced by negotiating a *Canadian Biodiversity Strategy*, which is presently before all provincial and territorial governments for final approval. At the Berlin Conference, Canada tabled a *National Action Program on Climate Change*, and under a National Voluntary Challenge Program, cities across Canada are working towards a 20 % reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2005.

✔ **Risks to human health and the environment** have been reduced by:

• accelerating the phasing out of CFCs and methyl chloroform under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*;
• releasing the first *National Pollutants Release Inventory*, to permit sources of pollution to be more readily identified for enforcement action and to help track progress towards sustainable development;
• renewing agreements to clean up the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River, and in support of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

✔ Establishment of the Office of the *Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainable Development* has advanced the **federal house in order** agenda. Each department will prepare Sustainable Development Strategies, including plans for the greening of their operations and policies, against which the Commissioner will report to Parliament.

✔ Contributions to **economic opportunity** were made through: the launching of the *Canadian Environmental Industry Strategy*; and as part of the 1995 budget process, completion of a comprehensive study of barriers and disincentives to sound environmental practices, such as the federal tax structure, grants and subsidies.

✔ A new *Action 21* campaign is being designed to **reach out to Canadians** and promote sustainable development at the community level.

✔ Strategic investments in science and technology have facilitated the design of a more automated and affordable weather warning program, while assuring continuing **quality services to Canadians**.

LOOKING AHEAD: TAKING ACTION

✔ Working with its partners, Environment Canada will complete and release new generations of national strategies for managing toxic substances, preventing pollution, and reducing acid rain. In this context, the department will recommend **more vigorous enforcement** of existing regulations, and new regulations or economic tools within its jurisdiction to accelerate the pace of change. It will also work with its partners in major ecosystems like the Great Lakes or St. Lawrence River to prevent pollution by toxic substances.

✔ Environment Canada will **advance the legislative agenda** by responding constructively to the Standing Committee Review of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act,* and introducing legislation to conserve endangered species;

✔ Environment Canada's major scientific activities will give priority to **long-term and serious risks,** chiefly loss of species and loss of the capacity of the environment to regenerate itself, including climate change and persistent toxic substances that accumulate in living creatures and plants.

✔ Working with **regions and communities on the ground,** Environment Canada will reduce risks to the environment and human health in major ecosystems by:

• completing 13 environmental quality assessments in Atlantic Canada;
• identifying and defining the characteristics of effluent from 39 targeted plants in the St. Lawrence Basin;
• finalizing 17 Great Lakes remedial action plans;
• completing the Northern (Alberta) Rivers study;
• reducing persistent toxic substances in up to 20 reaches of the Fraser River Basin.

✔ Environment Canada will provide **quality services to Canadians** through the consolidation and modernization of weather warning services.

✔ Environment Canada will **foster additional green technologies** within the federal government and encourage their wider use in the private sector and in other countries, creating new export and environmental opportunities at the same time.

✔ Working with environmental industry groups, Environment Canada will **expand economic opportunity** by finalizing a national certification program for environmental industries. It will support faster commercialization of numerous environmental technologies, many of which are tested and ready for market.

✔ Environment Canada will exercise **international leadership** by pressing strongly toward acceptance of actions to meet Canada's international commitments related to climate change and biodiversity.

✔ The department will continue to work to **eliminate unnecessary federal-provincial duplication and overlap,** focusing clearly on those areas where the federal government is best suited to deliver programs.

✔ Environment Canada will work actively with other departments and agencies to **get our house in order,** by providing guidance in greening operations to all federal departments and helping them to accelerate preparation of their Sustainable Development Strategies.

✔ The department will **reach out to Canadians** even more aggressively to encourage them to make the environment an important part of their daily decisions. It will complete the 1996 State of the Environment Report on time and under budget; move forward with electronic reporting; launch community-based activities to advance public awareness and involvement (Action 21); and establish 17 one-stop Eco-Action Offices to provide Canadians with comprehensive environmental information.

✔ Environment Canada will **commercialize** activities more appropriately delivered by the private sector, beginning with the Environmental Choice Program and technologies such as the Microwave Assisted Process (MAP).

MAKING THE TRANSITION

With a drastically reduced level of expenditure, the Canadian environment will only be safeguarded if the collective resources of all sectors of society are effectively brought together and aligned to common purposes. To exert the leadership that will bring this about, the department will have to change the way business is conducted in a number of important ways.

There are six points of transition which will see the department through this period of change:

Six Points of Transition

1 Working Better with the Provinces and Territories

Policies, strategies, and resources will be better aligned through minimization and elimination of overlap and duplication with provinces.

2 Consolidating Weather Forecast Production and Network Rationalization

The streamlining and modernization of the Weather Service will be accelerated.

3 Increasing Commercialization and Revenue Generation

The department will increase commercialization and revenue generation from specialized services and savings, as well as, at the same time, increase the relevance of the services provided.

4 Creating Partnerships in Science and Technology

Partnerships will be strengthened with all sections of society; and the department will strengthen its ecosystems approach to environmental science.

5 Reaching Out to Canadians

The department will reach out to Canadians through modern technologies like the Green Lane and through other innovative ways, to provide them with information and assist them in making decisions beneficial for the environment.

6 Human Resources Management

Renewal of the department's scientific and related expertise will enable the department to draw upon a personnel pool with the skills needed in today's world.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.

If you would like more information or a copy of the complete Environment Canada Business Plan 1995/96 – 1997/98, please contact the Environment Canada Enquiries Centre in Hull, Quebec, by calling (819) 997-2800 or writing to Environment Canada Enquiries Centre, 351 St. Joseph Bd, Hull, Quebec, K1A 0H3.