



Canadian Council of Ministers  
of the Environment      Le Conseil canadien  
des ministres de l'environnement

## Environment Ministers Work Together Improving Air and Water Quality

**Winnipeg, September 12, 2007** – Federal, provincial, and territorial environment ministers met today to continue improving air and water quality in Canada. With air quality and climate change increasingly recognized as significant issues by Canadians, ministers spoke frankly about how they could work together in further reducing risks posed by air pollutants and greenhouse gases.

“The regulation of air quality currently dominates the public environmental agenda, and governments are working collaboratively to address people’s concerns,” said New Brunswick Environment Minister and outgoing CCME President Roland Haché. “I am pleased that CCME will be used as a key mechanism for meaningful collaboration in shaping the development of the Federal Regulatory Framework for Air Emissions. For example, the federal government indicated its willingness to consider entering into equivalency agreements with interested jurisdictions.”

In addition, environment ministers agreed to pursue additional work through CCME on priority water issues of concern across Canada, focusing on climate change, valuation of water as natural capital and improved understanding and management of groundwater resources. They also initiated work on improving the timeliness and coordination of environmental assessments and a broader approach to regional environmental assessments, recognizing the interest expressed by premiers through the Council of the Federation.

Ministers are pleased to see the good results of their ongoing collaboration to make Canada-wide improvements to the environment. Since establishing CCME standards in 2000 to limit dioxins and furans from incineration, air emissions from incineration nation-wide have been reduced by over 85%. These reductions are even more meaningful when recognizing these are among the most stringent numeric targets in the world for these persistent, toxic and bioaccumulative substances.

“Considering recent accomplishments, CCME is, in my opinion, an outstanding example of how effectively inter-governmental relations can advance the environmental agenda in Canada,” said Haché.

Environment ministers also continue to guide development of a Canada-wide strategy to improve the handling of municipal wastewater and of an economic plan for sustainable funding of the initiative. Improved protection of environmental and human health is one goal of the strategy. Following extensive consultations with a broad range of stakeholders over winter 2006/07 and subsequent revision of the Canada-wide strategy, ministers directed officials to consult on the revised strategy and newly developed economic plan prior to its submission to ministers for their approval in spring 2008.

Following the meeting, Yukon Premier and Minister of the Environment Dennis Fentie will take over as President of CCME for 2007/08.

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