

## **Environment Ministers meet in Yellowknife**

**Yellowknife – June 28, 2011** – Federal, provincial and territorial Environment Ministers met today to share their experiences and lessons learned on a variety of issues including water, air quality and packaging used for consumer goods.

More than ever, they are committed to addressing environmental issues collectively. As the primary forum for collective action on environmental issues, CCME builds on the efficiencies that arise from working together for continued progress during challenging economic times.

Decisions on how water is managed can have a significant impact on the environment, the economy, and communities across the country. This has been highlighted by recent flooding in many regions of Canada, declining flows in several rivers and low levels in the Great Lakes and in Great Slave Lake.

“Sustainable water management is a priority and a challenge for Canadians, and continues to be a key concern for CCME,” said J. Michael Miltenberger, Northwest Territories Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, who hosted the meeting. “We are committed to working together as stewards of this valuable and shared resource.”

Jurisdictions reiterated their commitment to continue working in support of the CCME Water Action Plan approved in 2010. CCME has committed to promoting decisions based on scientific, traditional and local knowledge. Jurisdictions will continue to share information and approaches on management, protection, monitoring and remediation.

Ministers are pleased with progress to date on the development of the Air Quality Management System (AQMS) since October 2010, when CCME received a proposal developed collaboratively by representatives of industry, health and environmental non-government organizations, and federal, provincial and territorial governments. Ministers noted the significant human and environmental health impacts of air quality as key drivers for their strong support and interest in the timely development and implementation of the AQMS.

The AQMS will build on existing provincial air quality measures to better protect human health and the environment. Once in place, it will include more ambitious Canadian ambient air quality standards, consistent requirements for industrial emissions, across the country and improved management of mobile source emissions.

The AQMS will also include guidelines to delineate air zones, a system of regional airsheds to reduce transboundary air pollution, and monitoring and single-window reporting requirements.

Ministers aim to endorse the final elements of the system in 2012, and begin to implement them in 2013, subject to approval by individual jurisdictions.

Concerned with the amount of packaging material in the Canadian marketplace, Ministers announced that CCME will build on existing initiatives from governments and industry groups in Canada and abroad, and develop a Canada-wide approach to optimize packaging reductions.

CCME will establish an industry-government working group to assist in the development of the approach, which will include targets, timelines and reporting mechanisms to produce measureable reductions in packaging. Ministers will review the approach in Spring 2012.

This complements the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility endorsed in 2009.

The next meeting of CCME will be hosted by Alberta.

*CCME is the primary minister-led intergovernmental forum for collective action on environmental issues of national and international concern.*

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