



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

## ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS DISCUSS CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLEAN AIR

**Montréal, QC – October 3, 2016** – Federal, provincial and territorial environment ministers met today in Montréal to advance the development of a pan Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.

“We have a historic opportunity for a sustained transition to a low-carbon, clean growth and climate resilient economy. This includes substantial reductions of greenhouse gas emissions in all sectors coupled with investments in and measures to build resilience to the impacts of climate change,” said David Heurtel, Québec’s Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change, who hosted his colleagues at the annual meeting of CCME.

Last March, in the Vancouver Declaration, First Ministers agreed to develop a pan Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change to achieve Canada’s international commitments in the Paris Accord. They agreed to implement policies in support of meeting or exceeding Canada’s 2030 target of a 30% reduction below 2005 levels of emissions.

First Ministers also committed to transitioning to a low carbon economy by adopting a broad range of domestic measures, including carbon-pricing mechanisms adapted to each province’s and territory’s specific circumstances, in particular the realities of the Indigenous peoples of Canada and Arctic and sub Arctic regions.

As part of this process, Ministers reviewed reports on carbon pricing mechanisms, specific mitigation opportunities, and adaptation and climate resilience prepared by three federal-provincial-territorial working groups. The reports of the working groups will be released by the end of October.

Based on the options presented by working groups, Ministers discussed collaborative actions and will provide their input to First Ministers on the pan Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. Environment Ministers recognized that the unique circumstances of the territories, including the high cost of living, challenges with food security, and emerging economies means that a range of different policy options for reducing emissions will be considered. First Ministers will reconvene this fall to conclude the framework.

Ministers met with representatives of the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis National Council to discuss their ideas and to share perspectives about the opportunities and challenges as Canada moves to a stronger, more resilient, low-carbon economy. Ministers thanked these national Indigenous organizations for their continuing participation in the development of a pan Canadian framework and recognized the importance of continued ongoing collaboration as we move forward.

Ministers would like to thank Canadians who contributed their thoughts and advice to the working groups, noting that the engagement of citizens in developing a pan Canadian framework is essential, as climate change touches every industry and household in Canada.

“Our discussions today demonstrate our commitment to working together and joining forces to ensure a flexible, joint and complementary approach to fighting climate change based on the leadership, actions and specific circumstances of each jurisdiction,” said Minister Heurtel. “This will allow us to make further progress on emissions reduction, resilience, and transition to a low-carbon economy, consistent with the commitments made in Paris.”

Ministers will continue to collaborate on several climate change projects through CCME, including developing:

- an approach to inventories and projections that will improve the consistency of greenhouse gas emissions tracking and reporting;
- tools to plan for changes in the frequency and intensity of droughts and floods; and
- guidance for sampling soils and groundwater at contaminated sites in permafrost.

As a part of the continuing implementation of the Air Quality Management System (AQMS), Ministers took action to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions. These emissions are linked to respiratory health problems, particularly for children and adults with asthma, and environmental impacts such as acid rain and smog.

Ministers announced new Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) for sulphur dioxide, that will drive the improvement of air quality across the country. These standards were developed through a collaborative process that included industry associations, non-governmental organizations, indigenous organizations and governments.

The AQMS is a comprehensive and harmonized approach to air quality management across Canada that considers all sources of air pollution. Québec supports the general objectives of the AQMS, but has already implemented its own regulation and is collaborating with jurisdictions on developing some elements of the system, notably air zones and airsheds.

At the conclusion of the meeting British Columbia Minister of Environment Mary Polak took over the Presidency of CCME from Minister Heurtel.

CCME is the primary minister-led intergovernmental forum for collective action on environmental issues of national and international concern. CCME is comprised of the environment ministers from the federal, provincial and territorial governments.

[Vancouver Declaration](http://www.tinyurl.com/j53y4ol) ([www.tinyurl.com/j53y4ol](http://www.tinyurl.com/j53y4ol))

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