



Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Early Actions and Priority Files



Proactive Disclosure

The Access to Information Act

The *Access to Information Act* lays out proactive disclosure and publication requirements for Ministers' offices to follow. The relevant provisions of the Act are that:

- Ministers proactively disclose briefing materials upon assuming office (within 120 calendar days of appointment).
- Ministers proactively disclose the titles and tracking numbers of memoranda (briefing notes) prepared for the Minister within 30 days of their receipt by a Minister's office.
- Question Period notes, as prepared by a government institution for the Minister are proactively disclosed within 30 calendar days following last sitting day in June and December.
- Briefing materials for parliamentary appearances by the Minister be proactively disclosed within 120 calendar days after their appearance.

Proactive publication does not require the release of information that would normally be withheld in response to an access to information request.

Proactive Disclosure

The proactive disclosure and publication requirements will affect all the contents of this transition document. In the past, the Department has published transition material on the Environment and Climate Change Canada website to make it available to the public.

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Your First Months as Minister

Over the next few months, a number of **early actions** will require attention. These include decisions on regulatory issues, participation in international events, tabling of documents in parliament, and action on ministerial and Governor in Council appointments. **Outreach** with partners ranging from international, provincial and territorial counterparts, leaders of national Indigenous organizations, as well as key non-governmental and national industry organizations is also proposed.

Early Mandate Actions

As the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, a number of issues will be brought forward for your consideration and decision to advance and/or support the Department’s mandate. These issues include the following key items (Table 1).

Table 1: Early Mandate Actions from October to December 2021

	Theme	Item	Description	Action
October 2021 - Priority Items				
1	Climate	26 th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	COP26 will take place from October 31 to November 12, 2021 in Glasgow, UK.	Decisions on elements of Canada’s participation at UNFCCC COP26
2	Climate	Climate Finance Delivery Plan	Canada is co-leading with Germany an international process to produce a Climate Finance Delivery Plan to 2025.	Early briefing
3	Climate	Redacted the Net-Zero Advisory Body	The current Net-Zero Advisory Body is appointed by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Redacted	Redacted
4	Impact Assessment	Request(s) for Designation	The Minister has received requests to designate various projects pursuant to provisions in the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitt Meadows Road and Rail Improvements • Canadian Pacific Logistics Park • Tenas Project • Touquoy Gold Mine • Highway 101 Twinning • Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Expansion 	Determine whether to use discretionary authority under the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i>
5	Impact Assessment	Request for Regional Assessment	The Minister has received a request for a regional assessment pursuant to provisions in the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i> : Infilling in Halifax Harbour.	Determine whether to use discretionary authority under the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i>

Legend:

Legislative Requirement	Requires tabling in Parliament	Policy, Program & Regulatory
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	Theme	Item	Description	Action
November 2021 - Priority Items				
6	Climate	2030 Emission Reduction Plan pursuant to the <i>Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act</i>	The <i>Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act</i> requires that the Government of Canada establish an emissions reduction plan for the 2030 target by end of December, i.e., within six months of Royal Assent (June 29, 2021). The Act allows the Minister to extend the time limit by 90 days.	Early briefing and direction on next steps
7	Nature	Species protection under <i>Species at Risk Act</i>	Following science-based assessment, determine next steps on Western Chorus Frog in Quebec.	Decision on recommending potential action
8	Climate	Canada's Long Term Strategy submission to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	At the G7 in 2021, G7 members committed to submit a Long Term Strategy outlining the approach to reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 in advance of COP26, or shortly thereafter.	Decision on Canada's approach
9	Climate	Sustainable Finance Action Council (SFAC)	The SFAC's mandate is to help lead the Canadian financial sector towards integrating sustainable finance into standard industry practice. The SFAC will submit a letter to the Ministers of Finance and ECC annually on its activities and expected areas of focus in the next year.	Early briefing and direction on next steps
10	Climate	Inefficient Fossil Fuel Subsidies	Review of non-tax inefficient fossil fuel subsidies for Canada's G20 peer review with Argentina and to fulfill G20 commitment to rationalize or phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.	Early briefing and direction on next steps (in coordination with Finance)
11	Climate	National Adaptation Strategy	Next steps particularly related to outreach and consultation are needed related to the development of a National Adaptation Strategy in order to maintain momentum. Canada is one of only two G7 countries without a national adaptation plan.	Early briefing and direction on next steps
12	Climate	Our Healthy Environment and Healthy Economy advertising campaign	Campaign was launched during Summer 2021, and remaining media budget is available this fiscal year to buy digital and traditional media ads.	Discussion of next steps
13	Climate	Carbon Pricing	Fall engagement and consultation on carbon pricing, including: federal pricing system for industry; provincial/territorial systems; Federal GHG Offset System development.	Early briefing and direction on next steps

Legend:

Legislative Requirement

Requires tabling in Parliament

Policy, Program & Regulatory

	Theme	Item	Description	Action
14	Environmental Protection	Draft Single Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations	Draft regulations would prohibit or restrict six categories of single-use plastics that are harmful to the environment and hard to recycle: checkout bags, cutlery, foodservice ware made from problematic plastics, ring carriers, stir sticks, straws.	Early briefing and direction on next steps
15	Environmental Protection	Metal and Diamond Mining Effluent Regulations (MDMER)	Section 4.1 of the <i>Fisheries Act</i> provides provisions for equivalency agreements with a province, territory or aboriginal government.	Approval of a proposed Equivalency Agreement with the Government of the Northwest Territories (NWT) to stand down the MDMER in the NWT
16	Environmental Protection	Redacted	Redacted	Redacted
17	Environmental Protection	Redacted	Redacted	Redacted
18	Environmental Protection	Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) Concentration Limits for Certain Products Regulations	The proposed Regulations would establish VOC concentration limits and reduce VOC emissions by 25 kilo-tonnes and have net benefits of \$500 million over the first seven years.	Approval of proposed regulations
19	Environmental Protection	Redacted	Redacted	Redacted
20	Nature	Redacted	Redacted	Redacted
21	Nature	Protection Assessment under <i>Species at Risk Act</i>	Protection assessments are underway for several species Redacted	Approval of protection assessments
22	Parks	Indigenous Engagement and Consultation on the development of an Indigenous Stewardship Framework	The Response to the Minister’s Round Table on Parks Canada 2020 included the commitment to develop a proposed framework to support Indigenous stewardship in protected heritage places, collaboratively with Indigenous peoples and partners.	Decision on consultation approach

Legend:

Legislative Requirement	Requires tabling in Parliament	Policy, Program & Regulatory
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	Theme	Item	Description	Action
23	Parks	Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada – new designations	The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, established under <i>the Historic Sites and Monuments Act</i> , advises the Minister on the designations of persons, places and events of national historic significance.	Approval of new designations and the approach to the review of designations
24	Impact Assessment	Referral to Review Panel	The Minister could exercise discretionary provisions in the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i> : Global Container Terminals (GCT) Deltaport Expansion Berth Four.	Determine whether to use discretionary authority under the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i>
25	Impact Assessment	Request for Designation	The Minister has received a request to designate a project pursuant to provisions in the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i> : Meltech Industrial Building.	Determine whether to use discretionary authority under the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i>
November 2021 - Routine Items				
26	Climate	Reporting of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) for 2021	Under the greenhouse gas reporting program, a notice is published every year in Canada Gazette Part I describing who must report and what information must be reported.	Approval to publish the notice
27	Environmental Protection	Review of Environmental Acts' Fines and Sentencing Provisions Report	Approval and tabling of the report in both Houses of Parliament is required by law by December 10, 2021.	Approval to table the Report
28	Environmental Protection	Renewal of Emergencies Notification Agreements with some provinces and territories	Six agreements with provinces or territories require renewal by March 2022 to ensure continued clear arrangements between jurisdictions.	Approval to post agreements for comment on Canada Gazette Part I
29	Environmental Protection	Chemicals Management Plan – Amendments to the Domestic Substances List	Under <i>Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999</i> the Minister has 120 days after a substance is eligible to add it to the list. On average, 12 to 14 amendments are made annually. A number of amendments will require approval in November.	Approval of amendments prior to registration and publication
30	Corporate (Portfolio)	Updated Delegation of Spending and Financial Signing Authorities Delegation Matrix	In accordance with the Treasury Board Directive on Delegation of Spending and Financial Authorities, departments are required to submit a revised Delegation Matrix to the Minister for signature within 90 calendar days of the Minister's appointment date. One is prepared for each organization in the Portfolio.	Approval of the three Delegation Matrices
31	Corporate (Portfolio)	2020-21 Departmental Results Report (DRR)	The DRRs are the account of actual performance for the most recently completed fiscal year relative to expected results set out in the Departmental Plans as required under the <i>Financial Administration Act</i> . One Report is prepared for each organization in the Portfolio.	Approval of the three Reports and signature prior to submission to Treasury Board Secretariat

Legend:

Legislative Requirement

Requires tabling in Parliament

Policy, Program & Regulatory

	Theme	Item	Description	Action
32	Corporate (Portfolio)	2020-21 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy Report	These Reports account for actual performance of the most recently completed fiscal year relative to the departmental activities and expected results set out in the Sustainable Development Strategy. Separate reports are prepared for ECCC and Parks Canada.	Approval to table the Reports
33	Corporate (Portfolio)	<i>Access to Information Act</i> and <i>Privacy Act</i> Annual Reports	Annual reports tabled in Parliament under the <i>Access to Information Act</i> and the <i>Privacy Act</i> . Separate reports are prepared for each Portfolio organization.	Approval to table the reports
34	Corporate (Portfolio)	2020-21 Fees Report	Annual reports tabled in Parliament under the <i>Service Fees Act</i> . Separate reports are prepared for each Portfolio organization.	Approval to table the reports
35	Corporate	Progress Report on the 2019-2022 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy	The three-year report that highlights progress against the goals and targets of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy is to be tabled in Parliament.	Approval to table the report
36	Corporate	Fall 2021 reports by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development	In accordance with the <i>Auditor General Act</i> , the Auditor General/Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development will table a series of reports this fall. The Minister leads the response to these reports on behalf of the Government of Canada.	Approval of the communications strategy to respond to the reports
December 2021 - Priority Items				
37	Climate	Review of the effectiveness of existing federal methane policy	A report on the 2025 Methane review on the effectiveness of existing federal methane policy to achieve the target of 40-45% reduction in methane emissions by 2025 is expected to be finalized. The Strengthened Climate Plan committed to publically reporting on the review by December 2021.	Approval to publish the final review report
38	Environmental Protection	Publication of the Notice with respect to the substances in the National Pollutant Release Inventory for 2022, 2023 and 2024 in the Canada Gazette Part I	Certain facilities are required to report releases, disposals and recycling of over 300 substances to the National Pollutant Release Inventory every year. Reporting requirements are published in a notice every three years under the authority of section 46 of the <i>Canadian Environmental Protection Act</i> .	Approval of the notice

Legend:

Legislative Requirement

Requires tabling in Parliament

Policy, Program & Regulatory

	Theme	Item	Description	Action
39	Environmental Protection	Prohibition of Certain Toxic Substances Regulations	<p>The proposed regulations would add additional substances and remove some current exemptions. Substances added to these regulations would also require publication of a proposed Order amending the Export Control List.</p> <p>Approval to publish the proposed regulations to update existing regulations by adding additional substances and removing some current exemptions.</p>	Approval to publish proposed regulations and proposed order
40	Parks	Federal Heritage Review Office – new designations	The Minister has the authority to designate heritage buildings upon review of the heritage values of federally owned buildings over 50 years of age by the Federal Heritage Buildings Committee.	Decision on designations
41	Parks	World Heritage Issues – Managing the State of Conservation of Wood Buffalo National Park Heritage Site	Parks Canada is the federal lead for implementing the World Heritage Convention in Canada and is the site manager for Wood Buffalo National Park World Heritage Site.	Decision on Canada’s proposed response
42	Impact Assessment	Significance of environmental effects	<p>Decisions on significance of environmental effects, under the <i>Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012</i> on the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bay du Nord • Énergie Saguenay 	Determine significance of environmental effects on various projects
43	Impact Assessment	Request for designation	The Minister has received a request to designate a project pursuant to provisions in the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i> : Vivian Sand.	Determine whether to use discretionary authority under the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i>
December 2021 - Routine Items				
44	Nature	Species at Risk Annual Report 2020	A report must be prepared and tabled each calendar year. Tabling expected between November 2021 to January 2022.	Approval to table the Report
45	Nature	<i>Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act</i> Annual Report, 2020 (WAPPRIITA)	A report must be prepared and tabled each calendar year on the administration of this Act. Tabling expected between November 2021 to January 2022.	Approval to table the Report
46	Nature	Publication of multi-species report on critical habitat protection under the <i>Species at Risk Act</i>	Section 63 of the <i>Species at Risk Act</i> requires updates for listed species to be published every 180 days. Deadline for publication of the next report is December 31, 2021.	Approval to publish the Report

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	Theme	Item	Description	Action
47	Environmental Protection	Chemicals Management Plan – Amendments to the Domestic Substances List	Under <i>Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999</i> , the Minister has 120 days after a substance is eligible to add it to the list. On average, 12 to 14 amendments are made annually. One amendment will require approval in December.	Approval of amendments prior to registration and publication
48	Corporate	2022-23 Annual Reference Level Update (ARLU), Main Estimates	The annual reference level update (ARLU) is a technical exercise to update departmental funding for future fiscal years. The reference levels form the basis of the Main Estimates, used to seek Parliament’s approval of departmental spending for the next fiscal year.	Approval of the ARLU and supporting documents
49	Parks	2021 State of Canada’s Natural and Historic Places Report	Every five years, per the <i>Canada National Parks Act</i> , the Minister is legislatively required to table in Parliament a report on the state of national parks, national historic sites, national marine conservation areas and other protected heritage areas and heritage protection programs. The last report was tabled in 2016.	Approval to table the Report
50	Impact Assessment	2020-2021 Reports by Federal Authorities with Obligations under Section 71 of the <i>Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012</i>	A consolidated annual report to Parliament of federal authorities having to report their activities under section 67 and 68 of the <i>Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012</i> .	Approval to table the Report

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Proposed Outreach

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) works in close collaboration with stakeholders and partners to achieve its mandate. These include **provincial, territorial and international counterparts**, as well as leaders of **national Indigenous organizations**.

Separate listings of select non-governmental organizations and stakeholders, as well as national industry organizations, are provided in the Departmental Overview.

Provincial and Territorial Counterparts

The following is a list of your provincial and territorial counterparts that are also members of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) and/or the Conservation, Wildlife and Biodiversity (CWB).

Alberta

Hon. Jason Nixon, Ministry of Environment and Parks (CCME, CWB)

Hon. Devin Dreeshen, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (CWB)

British Columbia

Hon. George Heyman, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (CCME, CWB)

Hon. Katrine Conroy, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (CWB)

Manitoba

Hon. Sarah Guillemard, Department of Conservation and Climate (CCME, CWB)

Hon. Ralph Eichler, Department of Agriculture and Resource Development (CWB)

New Brunswick

Hon. Gary Crossman, Department of Environment and Local Government (Minister of Environment and Climate Change) (CCME, CWB)

Hon. Mike Holland, Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development (CWB)

Newfoundland and Labrador

Hon. Bernard Davis, Department of Environment and Climate Change (CCME, CWB)

Hon. Derrick Bragg, Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (CWB)

Northwest Territories

Hon. Shane Thompson, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (CCME, CWB)

Nova Scotia

Hon. Tim Halman, Department of Environment and Climate Change (CCME, CWB)

Hon. Tory Rushton, Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (CWB)

Nunavut

Hon. Joe Savikataaq, Department of Environment (Premier of Nunavut; Minister of Environment; Minister of Energy) (CCME, CWB)

Ontario

Hon. David Piccini, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (CCME, CWB)

Hon. Greg Rickford, Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (CWB)

Prince Edward Island

Hon. Steven Myers, Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action (CCME, CWB)

Québec

M. le Ministre Benoit Charette, Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques (CCME, CWB)

M. le Ministre Pierre Dufour, Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (CWB)

Saskatchewan

Hon. Warren Kaeding, Ministry of Environment (CCME, CWB)

Yukon

Hon. Nils Clarke, Department of Environment (CCME, CWB)

National Indigenous Organizations

Assembly of First Nations

RoseAnne Archibald, National Chief

Métis National Council

Cassidy Caron, President

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Natan Obed, President

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

Elmer St. Pierre, National Chief

Native Women's Association of Canada

Lorraine Whitman, President

International Counterparts

United States

John Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate (SPEC)

SPEC is a position in the Executive Office of the President of the United States with authority over diplomacy in energy policy and climate policy.

Michael S. Regan, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Michael S. Regan leads the EPA, an independent agency, whose mission is to protect human health and the environment. The EPA also conducts environmental assessments, and maintains and enforces national standards under a variety of environmental laws and regulations. Administrator Regan is the United States' representative on the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation Council.

Debra Haaland, Secretary, Department of Interior (DOI)

Debra Haaland leads the DOI, which has responsibility for the management and conservation of most federal lands and natural resources. DOI is also responsible for the administration of programs relating to Native Americans, territorial affairs, and insular areas of the United States, as well as programs related to historic preservation. Related agencies include the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service.

Germany

Svenja Schulze, Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

Canada and Germany collaborate increasingly closely on environment issues, including under the Canada-Germany Deputy Minister-level steering group launched in the summer of 2021. Germany joined the Powering Past Coal Alliance in 2019 and has shown itself motivated to help further the goals of the Alliance. Germany will also assume the G7 Presidency in 2022 and is expected to advance an ambitious agenda on the environment and climate change. Note: Federal elections were held in Germany on September 26, 2021.

United Kingdom

Alok Sharma, Minister of State at the Cabinet Office (Cabinet Minister)

Minister Sharma is the President of the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26) in Glasgow, Scotland from October 31 - November 12, 2021.

Kwasi Kwarteng, Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (Cabinet Minister)

Secretary of State Kwarteng leads the department of business energy and industrial strategy as a full Cabinet Minister and his responsibilities include climate change policies and negotiations, clean growth, and energy transition, including the Powering Past Coal Alliance.

Greg Hands, Minister of State (Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change)

Minister Hands is the new co-chair of the Powering Past Coal Alliance with Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change as of September 16, 2021. Minister Hands reports directly to Secretary Kwarteng.

Lord Zac Goldsmith, Minister of State for the Pacific and Environment (right to attend Cabinet)

Minister Goldsmith leads on biodiversity and nature-based solutions.

France

Barbara Pompili, Minister for Ecological Transition

Canada and France work closely together on climate and environment issues, including through the Canada-France Climate and Environment Partnership.

Italy

Roberto Cingolani, Minister for Ecological Transition

Italy holds the Presidency of the G20 in 2021, and has identified 'Planet' as one of three core priorities. In July 2021, Minister Cingolani chaired G20 Environment, Climate and Energy Ministers' meetings. The G20 Leaders' Summit will take place on October 30-31, 2021 which precedes UNFCCC COP26.

European Union

Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice President, European Green Deal

Canada and the EU collaborate closely on climate change issues and the EU is an influential player in international negotiations. Canada and the EU engage bilaterally under the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and the Strategic Partnership Agreement. Mr. Timmermans leads the development of the Green Deal, including transforming Europe to become the world's first "climate-neutral" continent by 2050. He also holds the role of Commissioner for Climate Action in the EU (supported by the Directorate-General for Climate Action).

Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner, Environment, Fisheries and Oceans

Commissioner Sinkevičius is responsible for several key elements under the European Green Deal, including biodiversity, circular economy, zero pollution ambition, chemicals, and plastic pollution.

Mexico

María Luisa Albores González, Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources

Canada and Mexico engage in strong trilateral collaboration through the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) and the Canada-Mexico Partnership. Secretary Albores is the Mexican representative on the CEC Council and current President of the Council until June 2022. Mexico is one of Canada's important partners in the Americas.

Japan

YAMAGUCHI Tsuyoshi, Minister of the Environment

Canada and Japan are increasing their collaboration on environmental issues. Environment and climate change is one of six shared Canada-Japan priorities for a free and open Indo-Pacific region that were jointly announced by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of both countries in May, 2021. As an influential regional partner and member of the G7 and G20, there are several areas for further collaboration on climate and the environment with Japan.

China

HUANG Runqiu, Minister of Ecology and Environment

China will chair the Convention on Biological Diversity for the next two years. Minister Huang is the Chinese Executive Vice Chair of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development.

XIE Zhenhua, Special Envoy on Climate Change

Xie Zhenhua will be one of the key players at COP26. He led China's delegation during key climate negotiations in Copenhagen (2009) and Paris (2015). He was re-appointed special envoy in early 2021 to work more closely with Western nations on climate change. China plays a key role in climate change negotiations, has significant influence over developing countries and can facilitate consensus at UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties meetings.

Indonesia

Siti Nurbaya Bakar, Minister of Environment and Forestry

Indonesia will assume the G20 Presidency in 2022. While Indonesia has yet to communicate its priorities for its Presidency, it has recently played an active role in some areas of international environmental cooperation, such as co-chairing with the United Kingdom the COP26 Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue to advance global cooperation against deforestation and on sustainable land-use. Early engagement could offer Canada the opportunity to establish a productive relationship with the Indonesian G20 Presidency and contribute to shaping the G20 agenda on environment and climate issues in 2022

Priority Files

Priority files are comprised of issues that require attention and are core to Environment Climate Change Canada's (ECCC) mandate or its functioning. These include files related to employees and people management, as well as policy priorities such as climate change, nature and biodiversity, freshwater, weather and environmental prediction, environmental protection and emergencies, enforcement, and broader government-wide horizontal files such as the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy

COVID-19

ISSUE

- Environment and Climate Change Canada's (ECCC) response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BACKGROUND

- ECCC successfully transitioned much of its workforce to full-time remote work with minimal disruption. Within the first several months of the pandemic ECCC was 99% operational and experienced no interruption to its critical functions, including 24/7 weather forecasting.
- Overall, ECCC has demonstrated operational stability over a long period in a modified work environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. This success is primarily attributable to the adaptability and commitment of ECCC's workforce and the efforts of all corporate services in deploying essential tools and services. Some specific successes include:
 - more than 170 new innovations in weather data modelling;
 - the immediate accommodation by information technology (IT) of 2,000 concurrent online users, 4,000 a month later and 10,000 today; and
 - launching senior leadership governance structure during the first week of the response.
- Occupational health and safety was prioritized throughout the pandemic. New safety procedures were created for program delivery, access to ECCC facilities procedures were implemented, and a comprehensive contact tracing process was established. Ensuring the safety of employees was critical in ECCC's efforts to support mental well-being and productivity. Four 'Check-In' surveys have confirmed that employees feel supported and are coping well.
- ECCC contributed to the overall Government of Canada COVID-19 response by converting laboratories to support COVID testing, processing more than 20,000 tests during 24/7 operations. ECCC also supports wastewater monitoring programs, which is a critical early warning indicator that helped inform the decisions of local public health units.
- ECCC is moving forward on planning for the gradual and safe return to the workplace. ECCC has completed a preliminary review of all positions to help define accommodation and IT needs for the next 12 months. Concurrently, ECCC is assessing longer-term opportunities for program, accommodation and work place modernization.
- Consistent with the Government of Canada's Policy on COVID-19 Vaccination for the Core Public Administration including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, employees of ECCC must be fully vaccinated. Implementation of the new policy is underway.

Phoenix

ISSUE

- Since Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) implemented the Phoenix Pay System (“Phoenix”) in February 2016, thousands of employees across the federal government, including Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), continue to be negatively impacted financially and in their personal lives.

BACKGROUND

- Working with PSPC, ECCC developed a plan, strategies and initiatives to support ECCC employees and managers with Phoenix pay issues.
- This plan includes ECCC actions to help stabilize the pay system and ensure that employees are paid accurately and on time. ECCC actions include:
 - Support from the Human Resources Branch (HRB) to all Branch Heads and pay delegated managers in meeting the minimum standards set by Treasury Board Secretariat on the timeliness of Human Resources transactions including communication to managers of the Department’s internal business processes and timelines for hiring students;
 - Creation of a comprehensive virtual Pay and Leave Guide to support employees and managers for any transaction or life event that has an impact on pay; and
 - Mandatory training sessions for over 1,000 pay delegated managers, to ensure the full engagement of ECCC management.
- A dedicated Pay Liaison Team also provides key services to ECCC employees and managers, including:
 - Facilitating the implementation and functioning of the PSPC Pay Pod and working in close collaboration with PSPC to get to a steady state as quickly as possible and to mitigate pay hardships on ECCC employees;
 - Placing a focus on priority pay cases such as no pay, low pay, maternity/parental leave and students;
 - Offering priority payments to employees experiencing financial hardship;
 - Supplementing pod activities to address significant, longstanding and/or complex pay issues in the backlog;
 - Submitting accurate Pay Action Requests on behalf of ECCC employees to the PSPC Pay Centre; and
 - Providing general assistance to employees and managers on issues related to pay and benefits.
- The number of ECCC employees with outstanding pay transactions has gone down since June 2018 (from 7,732 employees in June 2018 to approximately 5,313 employees in June 2021), as per the information provided by the Public Service Pay Centre operated by PSPC.

Diversity, Inclusion and Employment Equity

ISSUE

- Diversity, inclusion and employment equity are priorities across the public service. Advancing these priorities will ensure that Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) employees are both representative of and aware of the needs of diverse populations across Canada. To achieve its mandate, ECCC must reflect the diversity of those it serves and provide a work environment that is inclusive for everyone.

BACKGROUND

- ECCC is committed to becoming a model organization fostering an inclusive, healthy and respectful workplace. This workplace is to be one in which all employees can participate fully, individual differences are respected, everyone is treated with dignity and fairness, and harassment and discrimination are never tolerated.
- In response to the Clerk of the Privy Council's Call to Action on Anti-racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service in January 2021 and following extensive consultation with employees, ECCC launched a three-year departmental strategy in June 2021 which will be the primary tool to advance diversity, inclusion and employment equity within the Department. The strategy focuses on four primary pillars: i) recruitment; ii) employee development and retention; iii) education and awareness; and iv) governance support.
- In terms of employment equity, ECCC has made firm commitments in the departmental 2021-2024 Diversity, Inclusion and Employment Equity Strategy to reduce and eliminate overall departmental rates of employment equity under-representation. The progress on this strategy is being measured through a formal internal reporting process which includes employment equity gap reports and Public Service Employee Survey results. ECCC continues to see gradual improvements towards the overall departmental under-representation for persons with disabilities, and progress on hiring more black and indigenous employees at all levels, and has recently eliminated the overall departmental gap for the members of visible minorities employment equity group.
- Other notable accomplishments related to diversity, inclusion and employment equity include implementation of a comprehensive diversity, inclusion and employment equity governance structure resulting in the following:
 - two appointed diversity and inclusion branch head champions;
 - creation of new diversity, inclusion and employment equity related networks, including the Black Employees Network;
 - regular meetings with all networks, including establishment of a diversity, inclusion and employment equity leadership council chaired by the Deputy Minister;
 - establishment of a centralized diversity and inclusion fund to support network/departmental activities;
 - regular reporting to senior management on diversity, inclusion and employment equity;

- more frequent and focused discussions on diversity, inclusion and employment equity, with deeper engagement with employee networks, at senior management tables; and
- diversity, inclusion and employment equity was the primary focus of the 2021 Executive Leadership Council with all executives across the Department.
- ECCC has legal obligations under the *Employment Equity Act*, including, the need to ensure the Department has an employment equity plan in place, to assure that every employee has the opportunity to self-identify as one of the four employment equity designated groups (women, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities), and that the Department conducts regular workforce analysis to report on the departmental representation on each of the above designated groups. In June 2021, Bill C-30 received Royal Assent. The Bill contained amendments to the *Public Service Employment Act* that are meant to strengthen diversity and inclusion through public service staffing.

Climate Change

ISSUE

- Climate change is a global threat – with significant impacts on the economy, biodiversity, and society.

BACKGROUND

- The world now faces a dual crisis of biodiversity loss and climate change. Changes in climate threaten the vital services that Canada's ecosystems provide and negatively impact biodiversity and Canada's freshwater resources. As nature degrades, it is less capable of absorbing and storing carbon, and buffering communities from the impacts of climate change.
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report (August 2021) reinforces that climate change is widespread, rapid, and intensifying. Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions occur in the coming decades.
- The impacts of climate change – from flooding and permafrost thaw to extreme heatwaves and wildfire – pose a threat to Canadians' health, economic well-being, and safety. While Canada works to reduce its GHG emissions, efforts to adapt to and address the effects of climate change across the country are also needed.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) leads the Government of Canada's domestic efforts to address climate change. Through engagement and partnerships with other federal departments and agencies, provinces, territories, Indigenous peoples, stakeholders and external experts, the Department is working to mitigate climate change by reducing Canadian GHG emissions, driving clean growth, and increasing Canada's resilience and ability to adapt to a changing climate.
- Working with partners, the federal government implements policies, regulations and programs to reduce GHG emissions, adapt to climate change impacts and drive clean growth in the transition to a low-carbon and resilient economy.
- Canada has obligations—for instance, under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change—to undertake climate change research, monitoring, and reporting. As a science-based department, ECCC plays an essential role in conducting and supporting climate science, data and analysis. ECCC's climate change science leadership is well acknowledged nationally.
- In 2015, Canada and 194 countries adopted the Paris Agreement with a common goal to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C. Under the Paris Agreement, Canada has committed to reduce its GHG emissions by 40 to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030.
- Canada's 2030 target and commitment to net-zero by 2050 are now enshrined in law (*Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act*). Delivering on these commitments will require effective implementation of existing policies, regulations and programs, and significant incremental effort.

- With a vast endowment of natural resources, manufacturing expertise, and a highly-skilled workforce, Canada is well-positioned to take advantage of the economic opportunities associated with a growing low-carbon global economy. Advancing climate policy to meet climate objectives would position Canada to take advantage of rapid economic growth opportunities in new, clean industries, while creating further opportunities by decarbonizing existing sectors through industrial transformation.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26)

ISSUE

- The United Kingdom (UK) in partnership with Italy will host the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from October 31 to November 12, 2021, in Glasgow. Key decisions for Canada's participation and objectives at COP26 include the Ministerial programme, side-events and announcements, the size and composition of Canada's delegation, and Canada's role in co-leading the Climate Finance Delivery Plan with Germany.

BACKGROUND

- The UNFCCC is a multilateral treaty adopted in 1992 that sets an overall framework for international efforts to tackle climate change. Approximately 30,000 delegates attend the annual COP, which features technical negotiations (including advancing the implementation of the 2015 Paris Agreement), high level ministerial dialogues, and official side events/thematic exhibits.
- While there is significant uncertainty due to the pandemic, the UK Presidency is planning for an in-person event and has indicated that contingencies will continue to evolve right up to and during the conference.
- The theme of COP26 is to enhance global climate ambition. The UK Presidency has framed this theme through the lens of four goals related to mitigation, adaptation, finance, and collaboration.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed formal negotiations and the advancement of any decision text for COP26.
- With strong global anticipation for a successful outcome, there are significant expectations for Parties to increase their climate ambition, including through enhanced 2030 emissions targets via nationally determined contributions (NDCs), plans to achieve net-zero by 2050, climate finance pledges, and constructive engagement to complete outstanding elements of the Paris rulebook (the rules needed to implement the Paris Agreement).
- Numerous governments, both developed and developing, are moving forward with ambitious climate plans, and a growing number of countries have made net-zero commitments. A number of large emitters, including the United States (US) and European Union, have recently submitted or announced strengthened greenhouse gas targets (or Nationally Determined Contributions) under the Paris Agreement. Canada's new Nationally Determined Contribution, submitted to the UN in July 2021, increased the emissions reduction target to 40-45% below 2005 levels, by 2030.
- Donor countries' commitments to jointly mobilize US\$100 billion per year by 2020 was a critical component for developing countries to sign onto the Paris Agreement. The latest estimates from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) indicate that the international community is only about 80 per cent of the way to that target. At the request of the COP President, in the lead up to COP26, Canada and Germany are co-leading a process to

further build trust that developed countries stand by their commitments and deliver on the US\$100 billion climate finance goal through 2025.

- The Minister of Environment and Climate Change typically leads Canada's delegation and is supported by Canada's Chief Negotiator for Climate Change, Canada's Ambassador for Climate Change and other federal officials.
- In the past, Canada's delegations have also included other partners and stakeholders such as subnational governments, Indigenous peoples, industry, youth and civil society. While the UK will not formally limit delegations, countries have been asked to take size into consideration.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report

ISSUE

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the Working Group I (WGI) Contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), The Physical Science Basis, on August 9, 2021. Five Government of Canada scientists, including four from Environment and Climate Change Canada, contributed as coordinating lead authors, or lead authors.

BACKGROUND

- IPCC Assessment Reports are internationally recognized as the most comprehensive and authoritative scientific assessments of climate change. They are conducted by scientists around the globe who volunteer their time to examine the thousands of scientific papers published each year in order to identify where there is scientific agreement and where further research is needed. These reports are neutral and policy relevant, but not policy prescriptive.
- This latest IPCC Report's key messages state unequivocally that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean, and land. It also makes it clear that immediate, rapid, and large-scale reductions in carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gas emissions are needed to limit global warming to below 2°C, with reaching net-zero CO₂ emissions a requirement for stabilizing global temperature.
- The report also confirms that human influence has contributed to weather and climate extremes, which are expected to increase in frequency and severity with every additional increment of warming. Additionally, many observed changes are irreversible for centuries to millennia, especially changes in the ocean, ice sheets and sea level, even after global temperature is stabilized.
- This report, and IPCC assessments like it, underpin assessments of changes in Canada's climate such as Canada's Changing Climate Report, released in 2019. While this report does not contain an assessment of changes in climate for Canada as a whole, many of the regional findings are consistent with Canada's Changing Climate Report. For example, amplification of warming for northern regions is a robust feature of both past and future warming, and further declines in snow, glaciers, and sea ice, and near-surface permafrost are projected.
- This report will inform negotiations at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP26 in November 2021, and the remaining IPCC AR6 products will be released in advance of the Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement in 2023.

Climate Change

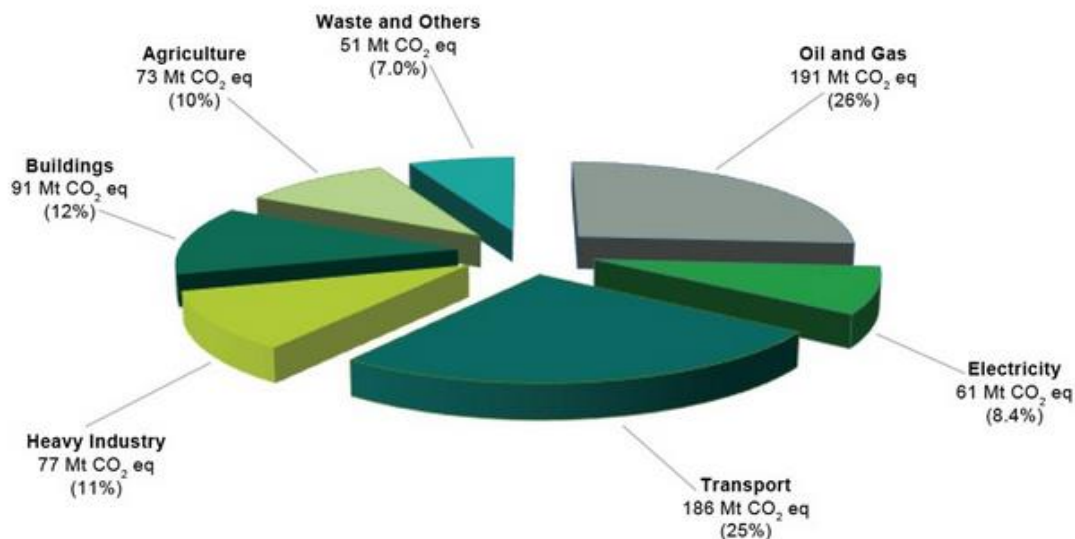
Climate Change Mitigation

ISSUE

- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) leads the Government of Canada's domestic climate change mitigation efforts.

BACKGROUND

- ECCC works with other federal departments to lead domestic climate change mitigation efforts, which includes the establishment of national greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction targets, as well as the development and implementation of plans, policies, programs and initiatives to meet these targets. ECCC also tracks and publicly reports on Canada's progress in meeting its targets. The Department engages and partners with provinces, territories, Indigenous peoples and stakeholders on collaborative efforts to reduce GHG emissions.
- According to the "National Inventory Report 1990 to 2019: Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks in Canada", Canada's GHG emissions were 730 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂ eq) in 2019, a net decrease of nine (9) Mt from 2005 emissions. The breakdown of Canada's 2019 emissions by economic sector is as follows:



- ECCC has supported the Government of Canada's efforts to reduce Canada's GHG through measures such as:
 - putting a price on carbon pollution;
 - regulations and programs to reduce methane emissions in the agriculture as well as the oil and gas sectors;

- investments and tax incentives in clean technology (e.g., carbon capture utilization and storage, hydrogen) research, development, demonstration and adoption to accelerate low-carbon solutions across industry;
 - support for renewable energy and electrification projects, including reducing diesel use in Indigenous, northern and remote communities;
 - increasing the stringency of emissions standards for light- and heavy-duty vehicles, and taking steps to improve efficiency and supporting fuel switching in the rail, aviation, marine and off-road sectors;
 - grants to increase energy efficiency and climate resilience in homes and buildings;
 - investments in natural climate solutions, such as tree planting and ecosystems restoration, conservation and improved management; and
 - adopting aspirational goals to decrease Canada's waste and achieve zero plastic waste by 2030.
- The *Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act*, which received Royal Assent on June 29, 2021, establishes in law Canada's 2030 emissions reduction target as Canada's Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement and Canada's 2050 target of net-zero emissions. The Act also establishes a transparent process for the government to plan, report, and course correct on the path to net-zero emissions by or before 2050.
 - The *Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act* also establishes the Net-Zero Advisory Body as a Governor in Council-appointed body. The Advisory Body is comprised of Canadian experts who will provide independent advice to the government on the pathways to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Their current mandate includes engagement and consultations with Indigenous peoples, province and territories, youth, various stakeholders, other experts, and the public. The Advisory Body will provide its advice to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change through an annual report, starting in 2022.

Adaptation and Resilience

ISSUE

- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) plays a central role in building Canada's resilience to climate change impacts by leading on adaptation policy development and coordination, climate science, and climate services (such as information, guidance, and resources to help Canadians understand climate change and make informed decisions). The Department is currently leading the development of a national adaptation strategy. Increased adaptation efforts are needed to keep pace with the rising impacts and costs of climate change.

BACKGROUND

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change notes in its last report that global surface temperature will continue to increase until at least the mid-century under all emissions scenarios. Canada is and will continue to experience accelerated rates of warming, occurring at about twice the global average and almost three times the global average in the North.
- The effects of widespread warming are evident across Canada, and will continue to intensify as warming continues. Heatwaves, wildfires, floods, droughts, rising sea levels, coastal erosion, thawing permafrost, and other climate-related impacts are posing serious risks to Canadian society, the economy, and the environment.
- Adaptation actions, such as infrastructure upgrades, urban planning, disaster management and business continuity planning, help protect Canadians from the negative effects of climate change. Adaptation is complementary to multiple federal priorities, such as emergency management, disaster risk reduction, and Canada's mitigation efforts.
- Many adaptation projects have high expected returns, with benefit-cost ratios ranging from 2:1 to 10:1, according to the Global Commission for Adaptation.
- Adaptation is a whole-of-government effort. ECCC leads overall climate change adaptation policy for the federal government. This work requires close collaboration with a number of other departments such as Natural Resources Canada, Infrastructure Canada, Public Safety Canada, and Health Canada.
- ECCC is currently leading the development of a National Adaptation Strategy with all levels of government, Indigenous peoples, and other key partners. This work offers the opportunity to unite actors across Canada through shared priorities, cohesive action, and a whole-of-Canada approach to reducing climate change risks.
- ECCC also plays a leadership role in creating and disseminating climate and weather data, which is foundational to help Canadians understand and become more resilient to climate change. Lead units include the Canadian Centre for Climate Services, the Science and Technology Branch and the Meteorological Service of Canada.
- Internationally, Canada submitted its first Adaptation Communication to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2021. Adaptation is expected to be a focus of the 26th Conference of the Parties in November 2021.

Nature

ISSUE

- Biodiversity is declining at an accelerated rate in Canada and globally.

BACKGROUND

- Globally and in Canada, we are witnessing abrupt and accelerating species decline, ecosystem fragmentation, sea ice loss, loss of wetlands and grasslands, ocean acidification, etc. For example, bird populations in North America have declined by 1/3 over the last 50 years, or by approximately 3 billion birds.
- The 2019 Global Assessment by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services found that biodiversity is being lost at a rate unprecedented in human history, and up to 1 million species are at risk of extinction. Biodiversity loss and climate change are dual crises.
- In addition to climate change, nature's decline is mainly due to changes in land and sea use (e.g., expansion of agriculture, forestry, and urban development). Other key drivers include overexploitation of organisms, pollution and invasive alien species.
- Addressing biodiversity loss is essential and pressing. We rely on nature for human health, security, survival and well-being.
- In Canada, protecting biodiversity is a shared responsibility. Collaboration and partnerships are essential to conserving nature in Canada. Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), in close collaboration with others, leads the Government of Canada's efforts to conserve nature and address biodiversity loss. Provinces and territories and Indigenous governments are key conservation partners. In fact, most of Canada is Crown land, with the vast majority of it administered by provinces and territories. In addition, Indigenous land claim agreements cover about 40% of Canada's land mass.
- ECCC's role on nature focuses on conserving species (e.g. migratory birds, species at risk) and spaces (i.e. the habitat in which species live). The Minister of Environment and Climate Change leads work on domestic and international biodiversity policy and negotiations, manages a large protected areas network, and ensures the protection and recovery of species at risk and their habitat across Canada. The Minister has exclusive responsibility for migratory birds no matter where they are found.
- Tools to conserve nature include collaboration with partners, legislative and regulatory actions, direct conservation, as well as funding and incentives. ECCC's conservation work is supported by science and Indigenous knowledge. See image below.

PORTFOLIO'S TOOLS TO CONSERVE NATURE

Collaboration and Influence

Partnerships with federal departments, provinces and territories, Indigenous organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private and philanthropic sectors and academia are key

Legislative and Regulatory Actions

- Strong suite of legal tools - significant « must do » obligations but also flexible enabling authorities
- Federal ***Species at Risk Act*** (SARA), ***Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*** and the ***Canada Wildlife Act***, etc.

Direct Conservation

- Establish and manage a network of **federal protected areas**, including ECCC's National Wildlife Areas, Migratory Bird Sanctuaries and Parks Canada's National Parks and National Marine Conservation Areas
- Currently, federal areas count for 38% of all protected areas in Canada

Funding and Incentives

- Grants and Contributions are **critical conservation tools** enabling actions & stewardship by others
- Matching funding leverages considerable financial and in-kind support
- **Tax incentives** e.g. Ecogifts

Science and Indigenous knowledge underpin all of ECCC's conservation work

Species at Risk

ISSUE

- In Canada, there are over 630 species at risk of becoming extinct or extirpated (i.e., no longer found in Canada) currently listed under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). SARA is the federal framework that provides the tools and authorities to protect and recover these species along with their habitat.

BACKGROUND

- SARA recognizes that biodiversity and species at risk management in Canada is a shared responsibility among the levels of government. SARA applies throughout Canada on federal and provincial public lands, as well as private lands. However, the authorities and obligations under the Act vary depending on land tenure. On non-federal lands, SARA is a backstop where provincial legislation or provincial protections are inadequate to protect listed species at risk.
- The Act provides a framework for federal action and sets out authorities and tools to be exercised by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans or the Governor in Council to support the protection and recovery of species at risk across Canada. These tools include emergency orders where necessary to protect a listed species. Since the Act came into force in 2003, there have been two emergency orders.
- The Minister is responsible for the overall implementation of SARA, as well as ensuring the protection and recovery of terrestrial species at risk and the protection of their critical habitat on federal lands. This includes approximately 80% of the over 630 species currently listed on under SARA. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has responsibility for the protection and recovery of SARA-listed aquatic species.
- The Act is considered in all federal environmental assessments where a proposed project could impact a listed species or its critical habitat.
- The Act requires consultation and cooperation with provinces and territories, Indigenous peoples, and a broad range of stakeholders. Ongoing engagement and collaboration facilitates stewardship activities to help protect species at risk and their critical habitat without having to resort to federal regulatory tools. These conservation activities are delivered in collaboration with provinces and territories, Indigenous peoples, and other conservation partners consistent with the Pan-Canadian Approach to Transforming Species at Risk Conservation, which focuses conservation efforts on priority species (caribou, wood bison, and Greater Sage Grouse), priority places (areas of high biodiversity value), and priority sectors (forestry, agriculture and urban).
- Notably, SARA allows the Minister to enter into conservation agreements with other governments, Indigenous peoples, or other partners, to benefit a species at risk or enhance its survival in the wild. As of August 2021, a total of 11 conservation agreements have been drafted or finalized for three priority species (boreal caribou, southern mountain caribou and wood bison).

Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

ISSUE

- Canada, as one of 196 Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) negotiating a new set of global biodiversity goals and targets, will need to present its priorities at upcoming meetings.

BACKGROUND

- At the fifteenth meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP15) in 2022, the international community is expected to adopt a new global biodiversity framework, with associated goals and targets that will guide worldwide efforts over the next decade to stem the loss of biodiversity and degradation of nature.
- COP15 is taking place in two parts, with an initial, largely virtual, session held in October 2021, and a final session in China in April-May 2022.
- The new global framework will replace the 2011 - 2020 CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its twenty “Aichi Biodiversity Targets”. Despite progress in some areas, none of the 2020 global targets were fully met, and species and ecosystems continue to decline at an alarming rate.
- Progress in Canada has also been mixed. At the time of the most recent assessment in 2018, Canada was on track to achieve 11 of its 19 national targets and has surpassed its target to conserve 10% of marine areas.
- Negotiations towards a Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework were launched in 2018, but have been delayed by the global pandemic. Face-to-face negotiating sessions in Switzerland are anticipated in January 2022, to agree to a final draft Framework for consideration by COP15 in April-May 2022. The negotiations are co-chaired by a Canadian official, Basile van Havre.
- Canada, along with other G7 countries, adopted the G7 Nature Compact, which commits to “the global mission to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030” as well as “supporting global consensus and to taking bold action for delivery of ambitious outcomes for nature” at CBD COP15.
- Since 2018, Environment and Climate Change Canada has been engaging other federal departments, provinces and territories, national Indigenous organizations, NGOs, youth, industry, and others, to inform Canada’s approach to the negotiations.
- International negotiations to date have focused on:
 - addressing the direct drivers of biodiversity loss;
 - including targets that are straightforward and measurable, with clear indicators;
 - addressing conservation, sustainable use, and benefit sharing from the utilization of genetic resources (the three objectives of the Convention) in a balanced way;
 - setting a global 30% conservation goal for 2030;
 - deciding what are appropriate levels of financing from all sources needed to achieve ambitious biodiversity targets; and
 - considering systems for better tracking implementation of and progress towards meeting agreed targets.

- Following the adoption of the Framework, Canada will be required to develop a corresponding domestic implementation strategy.

Protected and Conserved Areas

ISSUE

- Canada currently has an international target under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to protect 17% of land and freshwater and 10% of marine and coastal areas by 2020, and a domestic target of 25% of both terrestrial and marine areas by 2025.

BACKGROUND

- As of the end of 2020, 12.5% of Canada's lands and freshwaters and 13.8% of coastal and marine areas were conserved.
- Canada's protected and conserved areas are based on International Union for Conservation of Nature standards, and managed to ensure the long term sustainability of the areas' natural qualities and amenities. Biodiversity protection is the overall goal, but areas can be working landscapes, or support other priorities, so long as the biodiversity objectives are met.
- Since September 2020, Canada is also a member of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, which advocates for a more ambitious target of conserving 30% of the world's lands and oceans by 2030. The 30% target is supported by Quebec; other jurisdictions have voiced support for conservation, but have not endorsed a domestic goal beyond the 17% CBD target that they adopted in 2015.
- In Canada, working with partners is essential, as lands available for conservation and protection are under diverse jurisdictions - 70% provincial and territorial Crown lands, 11% private lands, 6% Indigenous lands, and 1% federal land. Protected and conserved areas are therefore established in close collaboration with Indigenous peoples; provincial, territorial, and municipal governments; non-government organizations; philanthropic foundations and the private sector.
- Given the direct relationship between reconciliation, land use, and conservation, Indigenous peoples are among Canada's most important partners in conservation work.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) supports protected and conserved areas work through funding for third party land protection, as well as expanding our federally managed network of National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries, managed under the *Canada Wildlife Act* and the Migratory Birds Sanctuary Regulations.
- ECCC's current network includes 92 Migratory Bird Sanctuaries and 55 National Wildlife Areas and covers 151,103 km², or an area roughly twice the size of New Brunswick. Some areas are co-managed with Indigenous partners under land claims agreements, or where there are strong community interests.

Canada's Freshwater

ISSUE

- There are a host of different freshwater challenges and pressures across Canada. The protection and preservation of freshwater quality, quantity, and aquatic ecosystems, is an integral part of Environment and Climate Change Canada's (ECCC) mandate.

BACKGROUND

- Canada has more than two million lakes and rivers – more inland waters than any other country. Canada has 20% of the world's fresh water and the third largest renewable supply of fresh water at 7%.
- Under the constitution, the responsibility for freshwater management is shared between federal, provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments. Key elements are also guided by legislation, including the *Department of the Environment Act*, *Canada Water Act*, *Fisheries Act*, *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999*, and the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*.
- Fresh water is central to economic growth, environmental health, and social stability and health in Canada. Fresh water supports fisheries, forestry, agriculture, energy, manufacturing, recreation, tourism, shipping, and navigation.
- Freshwater issues are regional in scale, but have national impacts. According to the National Issues Report (2021), climate change has altered patterns of rainfall, snow, ice and permafrost melt, exacerbating existing water availability and quality issues.
- According to ECCC's Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators, water quality in Canada is generally fair to good, with significant regional and local concerns. For example, in the Great Lakes-St Lawrence River region only 29% of sites were rated as having good water quality. Water quality tends to deteriorate where there is agriculture, mining, high population density or a combination of these pressures.
- More than 20 federal departments and agencies have responsibilities regarding fresh water. ECCC freshwater-related activities focus on research, monitoring and reporting on freshwater quality and quantity, transboundary water management, pollution control and ecosystem conservation activities, and development and enforcement of regulations.
- ECCC supports the International Joint Commission and works directly with the United States (U.S.) to address transboundary water issues. ECCC is currently supporting Global Affairs Canada in negotiation of a revised Columbia River Treaty. Three-quarters of Canada's 25 major basins cross provincial or territorial boundaries and nine share boundary waters with the U.S., with over 300 lakes and rivers crossing the international boundary.
- Canada and the U.S. have a long history of successful cooperation. The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement will celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 2022. It is an international model of effective binational cooperation on water.
- The Freshwater Action Plan has been the federal government's approach to restoring and protecting major freshwater ecosystems in Canada. This program provides funding for the Great

Lakes and Lake Winnipeg, and commits to actions in the St Lawrence, St. John, Fraser and Mackenzie river watersheds.

- In 2020 and 2021, ECCC led engagement with provinces, territories, Indigenous peoples, and the public on fresh water. Priorities identified for improved management of fresh water included climate adaptation, enhanced coordination, science, data and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Weather and Environmental Prediction

Weather and Environmental Prediction

ISSUE

- Environment and Climate Change Canada's Meteorological Service of Canada (MSC) provides Canadians and public authorities with essential and authoritative information on weather, water quantity, ice, air quality, and other environmental conditions, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. MSC also provides information and warnings regarding severe weather for Canadians to make informed decisions about their health, safety, and security.

BACKGROUND

- Weather services are one of the most visible services that the Government of Canada provides to Canadians—90% of Canadians seek out weather information daily and the MSC issues thousands of weather forecasts, warnings, and predictive products a day.
- To do this, MSC works closely with partners, including Shared Services Canada, to operate a highly integrated and technology-enabled, 24/7 end-to-end system. This system relies on a diverse set of monitoring networks covering an area of over nine million square kilometers, from coast to coast to coast. MSC's networks collect, process, and disseminate nearly one million observations a day, providing essential data for detecting and tracking severe weather, assessing current and past conditions, and feeding prediction models.
- High Performance Computing (HPC) is at the foundation of 24/7 mission-critical meteorological services and is essential to exploit growing volumes of datasets that are needed for robust modelling, forecasting, and prediction capabilities. Using HPC, MSC processes the large amount of weather and environmental data collected domestically, as well as approximately 13.5 million observations assimilated from across the globe daily. For predictions over North America, Canada's global models perform among the top three modelling centres around the world.
- Using data collected across Canada and the outputs of models, experts provide forecasts, warnings, and advice for Canadians and public authorities. Operational forecasters work around the clock from seven regionally-based Storm Prediction Centres to provide Canada's public weather programme.
- The MSC works in close collaboration with the provinces and territories and actively supports mission-critical operations of targeted clients such as the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Coast Guard, Canada's air navigation system, provincial, and territorial emergency managers and flood forecasting centres, as well as government operations centres at multiple levels.
- MSC supports national and international emergency environmental responses by providing advice for the predicted dispersion of pollutants in both atmosphere and water (in the event of forest fires, volcanic ash, oil spills and other hazardous substances spills in water, as well as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents). MSC also delivers on Canada's

international responsibilities related to atmospheric modelling and marine forecasts and warnings for defined areas in the Arctic Ocean.

- The MSC has continuously evolved and innovated to meet the needs of Canadians, public authorities, and other specialized clients through its 150 year history. As Canadians continue to experience unprecedented weather, the MSC is exploring new ways to evolve its operations in support of actionable services that meet the growing needs of Canadian communities for vital, life-saving services.

Extreme Weather Events

ISSUE

- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) provides vital information on weather, water quantity, climate, ice, and air quality conditions across Canada on a 24/7 basis. ECCC is also the authoritative voice for alerting the public, emergency management organizations and public health agencies about extreme weather.

BACKGROUND

- Canadians are experiencing more frequent and more intense extreme weather events. In this context, it is more important than ever to monitor weather and environmental conditions and provide forecast, warnings, and services that help Canadians and public authorities prepare and respond to unprecedented weather.
- The costs associated with extreme weather events in Canada are rising, with insured losses averaging over \$2 billion annually. Recent extreme weather events include:
 - extreme and prolonged heatwave in Western Canada in 2021 that led to 570 heat-related deaths, followed by over 200 wildland fires in British Columbia;
 - tornadoes in Quebec that touched ground earlier this year, leading to the loss of one life and significant property damages; and
 - major hail and windstorm in the Calgary region that caused \$1.28 billion in insured damages in 2020.
- ECCC's prediction and warning services are critical to anticipate, manage, and adapt to the risks created by rapid hazards such as floods, tornadoes and hurricanes, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat, as well as slow on-set hazards such as droughts, coastal erosion, and sea level rise.
- ECCC's weather products are disseminated to Canadians through multiple channels including weather.gc.ca, social media (Twitter and Facebook), and the WeatherCan mobile app. Weather warnings are also disseminated through the National Public Alerting System, which is overseen by federal, provincial, and territorial emergency management officials, with federal leadership provided by Public Safety Canada.
- ECCC provides specialized products and services on a cost recovery basis to the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Coast Guard, and private entities including Nav Canada to support the specific decision-making needs of the Canadian military as well as the marine transportation and aviation sectors.
- ECCC's cadre of Warning Preparedness Meteorologists work directly with public authorities at the federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal levels to provide decision-making support before and during weather-related disasters, as well as advice on actions that can be taken to mitigate impacts, save lives and reduce property damage.
- When Public Safety Canada activates the Government Operations Center (GOC) to respond to an event affecting the national interest in which weather plays an important role, ECCC provides

specialized products, shares strategic assets/resources, and provides subject matter experts and liaison officers to the GOC, as required.

- ECCC also contributes to the Government of Canada Get Prepared website, which provides advice on how to prepare for and take action in a variety of weather-related emergencies, including extreme heat and cold, tornadoes and storms.

Environmental Emergencies

ISSUE

- Environmental emergencies caused by the unplanned, uncontrolled, or accidental release of substances can harm the natural environment, human health, and the economy.

BACKGROUND

- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has legislated authorities to better prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from the harmful effects of environmental emergencies.
- Due to their size or impact on the environment, approximately 1,000 to 1,500 pollution incidents reported each year in Canada constitute environmental emergencies and require ECCC's scientific advice or oversight.
- Environmental emergencies can be highly visible and concerning to the public, and often receive significant media attention.
- Response to environmental emergencies is one of two Critical Services identified for Departmental Business Continuity Management and is integrated with the overall Government of Canada approach to emergency management.
- The National Environmental Emergencies Centre is the departmental 24/7 focal point for responding and coordinating the provision of ECCC's expert advice on environmental emergencies. It coordinates ECCC's technical and scientific expert advice and provides assistance, upon request, to the lead agency overseeing the responsible party's response actions.
- Under the Ocean Protection Plan, five federal departments collaborate to improve the marine oil spill regime and protect coasts and the marine environment. This work includes improved capacity to prevent and respond to ship-sourced oil spills, and to advance partnerships with Indigenous Peoples in coastal areas.
- ECCC participates in all aspects of the emergency management cycle, to varying degrees:
 - Prevention – implements the Environmental Emergency Regulations and provides expert advice on projects subject to environmental assessment
 - Preparedness – national and international contingency planning, preparedness training, and partnership building
 - Response – provides 24/7 spills notification and consolidates scientific and technical advice from departmental experts, and provides the responsible party and lead agency with the information needed to respond effectively
 - Recovery – assessment and advice to the responsible party on restoring environments that have been damaged by major spills of oils or chemicals
 - Scientific Support and Research and Development – research to improve knowledge of the fate and effect of spilled hazardous substances, spill countermeasures, and clean-up technology
- The *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* (CEPA) and the *Fisheries Act*, provide the environmental emergency authorities and require responsible parties to notify authorities of a

release of a substance or the likelihood thereof, and take appropriate corrective measures. ECCC has the authority to direct the responsible parties to take appropriate corrective or mitigative measures and to seek reimbursement.

- ECCC administers the Environmental Emergency Regulations, 2019, under CEPA. When certain conditions are met, the Regulations require industry to prepare emergency plans and provide written reports relating to environmental emergencies. The regulations came into force on August 24, 2019 and regulate 249 hazardous substances.
- ECCC works closely with provincial and territorial emergency response organizations, and with its American response partners across four emergency management pillars: prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.
- ECCC works in collaboration with the government of each of the following provinces and territories: Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Yukon. Under the Federal-Provincial Environmental Occurrences Notification Agreements, these provinces and territories receive spill notifications on ECCC's behalf, in order to reduce duplication of effort when the public must notify authorities of a spill. Work is underway to finalize renewal of the Notification Agreements that expired in March 2021.
- Indigenous peoples are important partners in the development and delivery of the emergency management pillars given they are often first on the scene for incidents in remote locations, their close dependence on environmental quality for food security, culture and self-governance of their territories (including lands and water), as well as traditional knowledge of local ecosystems. ECCC is supporting initiatives to co-develop environmental emergency plans with First Nations in British Columbia and to improve early notification of affected Indigenous communities across Canada about environmental emergencies close to these communities. ECCC also considers Indigenous and traditional knowledge along with other scientific information when providing expert advice during emergency response.

Environmental Protection and Emergencies

Canadian Environmental Protection Act

ISSUE

- The *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* (CEPA) is Canada's primary environmental protection law and it enables significant federal programming and activities.

BACKGROUND

- CEPA is relied upon to deliver environmental and health protection programs administered by Environment and Climate Change Canada and Health Canada, such as:
 - the Chemicals Management Plan;
 - greenhouse gas emission regulations;
 - the Canada-wide Air Quality Management System;
 - emissions reporting under the National Pollutant Release Inventory;
 - programming to address plastic waste; and
 - the Environmental Emergencies program.
- CEPA also provides the legislative and regulatory basis for the domestic implementation of various international obligations under bilateral and multilateral environmental agreements, such as:
 - the Canada-United States Air Quality Agreement;
 - the Basel Convention (movements of hazardous waste and recyclable material);
 - the London Convention and the London Protocol (disposal at sea); and
 - the Rotterdam Convention (prior informed consent for the international movement of hazardous chemicals).
- CEPA has not been comprehensively amended in over 20 years. Parliament has reviewed the Act several times during that period, each time recommending reforms.
- In 2017, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development finalized a review of CEPA and tabled a report which included 87 recommendations to improve the Act and its implementation. On June 18, 2021, the Committee completed a study of the enforcement of CEPA and issued a new report containing seven recommendations, one of which reiterates a key recommendation from the 2017 report.
- On April 13, 2021, the Government introduced Bill C-28, *Strengthening Environmental Protection for a Healthier Canada Act* in the House of Commons. The bill proposed to amend CEPA in two main ways by introducing a right to a healthy environment, and by strengthening elements of the foundation for the management of chemicals and other substances. Bill C-28 did not reach the next stage in the legislative process (debates at Second Reading) prior to the House of Commons rising for the summer recess. It died on the Order Paper when the 2021 federal election was called.

Environmental Protection and Emergencies

Chemicals Management Plan

ISSUE

- The Chemicals Management Plan (CMP), which was launched in 2006, is the Government's main program for assessing and managing human health and environmental risks from a wide range of substances used or created and emitted in Canada.

BACKGROUND

- The CMP is administered jointly by Environment and Climate Change Canada and Health Canada. The ongoing administration of the program involves frequent Ministerial decisions with respect to the various stages in the statutorily-prescribed CMP process.
- The CMP is a science-based program that assesses the risks posed by a wide range of substances, and, where required, takes risk management action (emission limits, product composition restrictions, use limits, etc.) to protect the environment and Canadians.
- Since 2006, the CMP has assessed over 4,000 of the substances that are in commercial use in Canada, has reviewed 6,420 pre-market notifications for proposed uses of substances not yet in commercial use, and has developed risk management measures for almost 500 of these substances.
- Canada is a global leader on chemicals management based on the strength of the CMP as well as its ongoing actions in support of international conventions and other fora.
- The program has been well regarded by industry, civil society and other countries for its robust science-basis, transparent priority setting processes, and well informed decision making about which risks to address and what measures to use.
- After 15 years and the near completion of one of its initial focuses, however, there is a need to start to refocus the CMP to address emerging issues of concern identified by ongoing science, changing uses of chemicals in products, and concerns about impacts on vulnerable ecosystems and populations.
- The CMP was renewed for three years in Budget 2021. The focus of work under this funding is on completing the remaining activities committed to when the CMP was created in 2006 and laying the foundation for modernization of the program.

Environmental Protection and Emergencies

Regulatory Priorities

ISSUE

- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) is one of the federal government's most active regulators.

BACKGROUND

- Regulatory initiatives respond to government priorities and legislated requirements in order to protect the environment and the health of Canadians.
- ECCC administers or shares responsibility for over 80 regulations or equivalents, addressing issues as diverse as pollution prevention, weather modification, wildlife protection, and emergency management.
- ECCC's standardized processes and robust governance have enabled the Department to maintain high quality analysis, extensive engagement, and to retain stakeholder confidence.
- Posted in April 2021, the Department's Forward Regulatory Plan for 2021 - 2023 reflected ECCC's regulatory priorities as of spring 2021. It proposed 64 regulatory initiatives, including new regulations, amendments to existing regulations, consolidations, and repeals.
- The proposed initiatives are grouped into the following categories:
 - Air Pollutants and Greenhouse Gas Emissions (22 entries);
 - Chemicals Management (13 entries);
 - Fisheries Act (9 entries);
 - Wildlife and Conservation (17 entries); and
 - Other (3 entries).

Environmental Protection and Emergencies

Plastics

ISSUE

- Plastics provide significant benefits to the Canadian economy and quality of life; however, plastic pollution is a major global challenge.

BACKGROUND

- In Canada, almost 90% of plastics are landfilled, with an estimated lost value of unrecovered plastic of \$7.8 billion in 2016. Plastic debris, including microplastics, have been found in large quantities in the Great Lakes and even in remote ecosystems such as the Canadian Arctic. Plastic pollution is a growing threat to Canada's environment and is a burden on our economy. Polls continue to show that Canadians want the Government of Canada to take action.
- While waste management in Canada tends to fall within the constitutional responsibilities of the provinces, the federal government plays an important role in the prevention and control of plastic pollution. Notably it builds and assesses the scientific evidence base for federal regulatory and non-regulatory measures, supports the development of coherent provincial/territorial extended producer responsibility measures through the Canadian Council of the Ministers of the Environment (CCME), and controls the transboundary movements of certain plastic waste.
- Global scientific understanding of how much plastic pollution is in the environment, how it gets there, and the impacts on ecosystems and humans is evolving. Canada's Plastics Science Agenda identifies priority research areas to address critical knowledge gaps and help leverage scientific capacity from key actors across all sectors, inside and outside of government.
- At the 2018 G7 in Charlevoix, Canada launched the Ocean Plastics Charter, which outlines actions to eradicate plastic pollution and recognizes the need for urgent action to address the impacts of marine litter.
- The federal, provincial and territorial environment ministers, through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, launched a Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste in 2018 and approved Phase 1 and 2 Action Plans in 2020.
- Parliament has looked into the issue and the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development presented a first report in the House of Commons on June 18, 2019, and a second report on April 13, 2021.
- Provinces, territories and municipalities have taken various measures to reduce plastic pollution and waste, including bans on single-use plastic checkout bags (Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island), and expanding the items covered by extended producer responsibility programs (British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec). These programs make companies responsible for the costs of managing the plastic they manufacture or import.
- Other countries are taking action. More than 127 countries have banned one or more single-use plastics, including China, European Union member states and the United Kingdom. Other

actions are also being taken to drive upstream design changes as well as better management of plastics at end-of-life.

- The Government of Canada is undertaking a suite of actions to reduce plastic pollution and move towards a circular economy. This includes supporting innovation to reduce waste across sectors and the plastics value chain, working with the provinces and territories to make producers of plastic products responsible for the waste they generate, developing requirements for recycled content in certain plastic products, reducing plastic waste in federal operations, and advancing regulatory work on a proposed ban for certain harmful single-use plastics.
- To inform the federal government's policy agenda and regulatory actions under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (CEPA), Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Health Canada undertook a Science Assessment of Plastic Pollution. It also consulted the public on an integrated management approach to plastic products to prevent waste and pollution, and the proposal to limit or restrict six categories of problematic single-use plastics items (checkout bags, cutlery, foodservice ware made from hard to recycle plastics, ring carriers, stir sticks and straws).
- Earlier this year, plastic manufactured items were added to Schedule 1 of CEPA, which has prompted legal action from private firms against the Government of Canada.
- The Basel Convention on the transboundary movements of hazardous waste and their disposal was amended in May 2019 to make the global trade of plastic waste more transparent and better controlled. Canada has been implementing the amendments through its regulations since January 2021.
- Canada primarily exports plastic waste to the United States, which is not a party to the Basel Convention. In order for Canada to continue to trade with the United States, an arrangement was put in place affirming that measures are in place for plastic waste circulating between the two countries to be managed in an environmentally sound manner.
- A negotiating process for a new global agreement on plastics is expected to be launched at the United Nations Environment Assembly meeting in February 2022.

Environmental and Wildlife Enforcement

ISSUE

- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) plays a key role in protecting the environment by assessing compliance with all the department's law and regulations, and by addressing instances of non-compliance by entities and people.

BACKGROUND

- ECCC's Enforcement Branch's mandate is extensive, covering eight acts, about 70 regulations, more than 500 enforceable instruments, about 150 protected areas or sanctuaries, over 35,000 protected species, and more than 110,000 regulatees.
- The Enforcement Branch also has 360 modern treaty obligations across 28 agreements with Indigenous groups.
- The Enforcement Branch has approximately 260 designated enforcement officers, stationed at 29 locations across the country, with the powers and protections of peace officers when enforcing ECCC legislation. Officers conduct an average of 6,000 inspections per year, uncover thousands of violations, and initiate more than 90 investigations.
- Enforcement officers have the authority to conduct inspections to verify compliance with ECCC laws and regulations, as well as investigations to determine the facts of a case and the appropriate means to compel compliance. Regulated entities are required to accommodate officers conducting inspections, including making documents and equipment available, and providing safe access to facilities.
- Officers use a wide variety of enforcement measures to address non-compliance, ranging from written warnings, to administrative monetary penalties, to prosecution.
- As is typical in law enforcement, the statutory powers given to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, with respect to enforcement, are generally exercised by the department's Chief Enforcement Officer, who reports to the Deputy Minister, and Enforcement Branch employees whose duties and training are appropriate to the exercise of those powers.
- The breadth and complexity of the Enforcement Branch mandate requires a highly targeted approach. The Enforcement Branch uses a risk-based approach to prioritize inspections where evidence indicates an offence is likely to occur and where significant environmental or conservation damage would result from an offence.
- As protection of the environment is a shared jurisdiction, collaboration across all levels of government is required to determine which level of government is best placed to respond to suspected infractions.
- Enforcement activities are disclosed, including through the searchable Environmental Offenders registry. Funds received from fines or penalties are typically directed to ECCC's Environmental Damages Fund.

Federal Sustainable Development Strategy

Federal Sustainable Development Strategy

ISSUE

- The Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS) is Canada's primary vehicle for federal sustainable development planning and reporting.

BACKGROUND

- The Federal Sustainable Development Act (the Act) provides the legal framework for developing and implementing a FSDS that makes decision making related to sustainable development more transparent and accountable to Parliament.
- The FSDS articulates the Government of Canada's sustainable development priorities, establishing goals and targets, and identifying the actions of almost 100 federal organizations to achieve them. For example, it outlines what is being done across government to combat climate change, support biodiversity, promote clean energy and infrastructure and build safe, secure and sustainable communities.
- The Act requires the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to table a strategy at least once every three years following a 120-day public consultation.
- Since 2008, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has developed four strategies in collaboration with participating federal organizations. The 2019-2022 FSDS, tabled on June 19, 2019, establishes the federal vision, goals, targets, and supporting actions for meeting each target.
- The next FSDS is slated to be released for public consultation in early 2022, with contributions from almost 100 federal organizations.
- A whole-of-government FSDS Progress Report is required under the Act at least once every three years. A Progress Report on the 2019-2022 FSDS will be presented to the Minister for tabling, which is slated for November 2021 or within the first 15 days of a Parliament sitting, whichever is later, in accordance with the Act.
- The Act was amended in 2020, following a 2016 Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development report with 13 recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness of the Act.
- The amendments, which came into force on December 1, 2020:
 - shifted the purpose of the Act to make decision-making related to sustainable development more transparent and accountable to Parliament;
 - added new principles, including intergenerational equity, the importance of involving Indigenous peoples, collaboration, and openness and transparency;
 - expanded the number of mandated federal organizations from 27 to almost 100; and
 - doubled Indigenous participation on the Minister's Sustainable Development Advisory Council.
- ECCC is drafting the first FSDS under the Act, as amended, with all mandated federal organizations.

- One year after the federal strategy is tabled, each mandated organization is required to table a departmental sustainable development strategy and subsequently report on progress.
- Oversight is an important feature of the Act. The Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development (CESD) is required to review the draft FSDS during its public consultation period to determine whether the targets and implementation strategies can be assessed.
- Under the Auditor General Act, the CESD also examines the FSDS progress reports in order to assess the fairness of the information with respect to the progress of the federal government in implementing the FSDS and meeting its targets.
- The CESD also examines how federal organizations mandated under the Act contribute to meeting the goals and targets in the FSDS, and implement the plans set out in their own sustainable development strategies.