



## COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

### *Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) (Protocol to the UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP))*

**SUBJECT CATEGORY:**

Chemicals & Wastes

**TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:**

Multilateral

**FORM:**

Legally binding treaty

**STATUS:**

- Signed by Canada June 24, 1998
- Ratified by Canada December 18, 1998
- Entered into force internationally October 23, 2003
- Entered into force in Canada October 23, 2003
- Amended in 2009; Canada has ratified some but not all amendments.

**LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:**

**Lead:** Environment and Climate Change Canada

**Partners:** Health Canada–Pest Management Regulatory Agency; Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada; Global Affairs Canada

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:****Web Links:**

- [Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants](#)
- [Stockholm Convention](#)
- [National Pollutant Release Inventory](#)

**Contacts:**

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

**COMPENDIUM EDITION:**

January 2020

**PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY**

Canada is a party to the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's (UNECE) Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP), the first international treaty aiming to eliminate or reduce POPs. POPs are particularly harmful chemicals that pose a serious threat to the environment and human health around the world. The Protocol on POPs was ground-breaking in the international fight against POPs and served as a model and stepping-stone to global action that now exists under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Canada's North is particularly impacted by POPs as they can travel long distances and tend to settle in colder climates, where they threaten sensitive ecosystems and indigenous peoples. International agreements like the Protocol on POPs and the Stockholm Convention help reduce POPs from all countries, which can ultimately end up in Canada.

LRTAP and its Protocols are unique. The organization is a leading scientific and policy forum for air pollution and closely links science and policy. This cooperation has been very effective and key to its success.

**OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the Protocol on POPs is to control, reduce, or eliminate discharges, emissions, and losses of POPs to the environment.

**KEY ELEMENTS**

Work under this Protocol allowed the Convention to acquire the expertise on best available techniques, emissions inventories, and monitoring and modelling to address emissions of POPs. This leadership paved the way for a global approach to this problem and inspired the Stockholm Convention. While the Stockholm Convention addresses the full life cycle approach to POPs, it is expected that LRTAP will continue to play an important role in scientific and technical research efforts.



The Protocol is a regional agreement requiring Parties to eliminate the production and use of intentionally produced POPs, restrict production and use of other listed POPs, and reduce emissions of unintentionally produced POPs using best available techniques. The Protocol also includes obligations for environmentally sound disposal of wastes containing POPs, as well as specific limit values for the incineration of waste.

Amendments to the Protocol in 2009 added seven new POPs and introduced more stringent requirements for several previously listed POPs. Flexibilities to encourage ratification from countries with economies in transition, notably countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South Eastern Europe (SEE), were also included.

### EXPECTED RESULTS

Implementation of the Protocol is expected to result in decreasing levels of POPs entering the environment over time.

### CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

The Protocol on POPs was the first international agreement targeting POPs, with Canada playing an instrumental role in identifying the POPs issue and garnering support for action. The POPs Protocol also served as the impetus for the global agreement on POPs, the Stockholm Convention, which entered into force in 2004.

Canada is particularly impacted by POPs as they can travel long distances and tend to settle in colder environments, like Canada's Arctic. The majority of the POPs of concern to Canada now come from foreign sources. International (regional and global) agreements help reduce emissions from many countries that can ultimately end up in Canada.

Canada's efforts to eliminate and restrict the production, use and release of POPs are implemented using authorities under the [Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999](#) and the [Pest Control Products Act](#) and associated regulations such as the [Prohibition of Certain Toxic Substances Regulations](#), [PCB](#)

[Regulations](#), and the [Export of Substances on the Export Control List Regulations](#).

## RESULTS / PROGRESS

### Activities

Major recent accomplishments for the Convention that have implications for its protocols include undertaking a scientific assessment of the Convention; developing a policy response to the recommendations of the report of the scientific assessment and updating the Long-term Strategy for the Convention based on that policy response.

Activities under the Protocol on POPs have phased down in recognition of global efforts under the Stockholm Convention. In December 2013, the LRTAP Executive Body adopted a principled approach whereby proposals for new listings would first be referred to the Stockholm Convention for consideration and additional action under the Protocol on POPs would be considered only if stricter measures in the UNECE region are warranted or if the substance is not ultimately listed under the Stockholm Convention.

### Reports

Canada submits inventory reports for the pollutants covered by the POPs Protocol in its annual submission to the UNECE. Canada will continue to report on these pollutants and meet its annual reporting requirements. Canada's most recent air pollutant inventory can be viewed on the [Air Pollutant Emissions Inventory: overview page](#). Its official submission to the UNECE can be found on [their website](#).

### Results

Canada has put in place regulatory measures for POPs under the Protocol on POPs.