



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

Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972

SUBJECT CATEGORY:

Marine / Oceans

TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:

Multilateral

FORM:

Legally-binding treaty

STATUS:

- Parties adopted the London Convention in November 1972.
- Canada acceded to the Convention in 1975.
- The London Convention came into force internationally on August 30, 1975.
- In 2019, it has 87 Parties. The treaty has been superseded by the London Protocol and is no longer being amended. It continues to be in force until all Parties move to the Protocol, but only the Protocol is implemented.

LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:

Lead: Environment and Climate Change Canada
Partners: Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), Transport Canada (TC).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Web Links:

- [London Convention website](#)
- [Environment and Climate Change Canada website](#)

Contacts:

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

COMPENDIUM EDITION:

January 2020

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

The London Convention was an international response to decades of dumping into the ocean. It was among the first global treaties to protect the marine environment from human activities, and halted the dumping and burning of industrial and radioactive wastes at sea.

In the 1990s, Convention countries recognized the need for a more cautious approach, and decided to adopt a new, freestanding treaty called the 1996 Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972 (called the London Protocol for short). The Protocol will eventually replace the Convention.

Although Canada is Party to both treaties, we only implement the Protocol (by doing this, we also meet our Convention obligations).

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the London Convention is that all Parties individually and collectively promote the effective control of all sources of pollution of the marine environment and pledge themselves to take all practicable steps to prevent the pollution of the sea by the dumping of waste and other matter that is liable to create hazards to human health, to harm living resources and marine life, to damage amenities, or to interfere with other legitimate uses of the sea.

Note also that this treaty is no longer being amended and has not had any new members as it is intended to be superseded by the London Protocol.

KEY ELEMENTS

The Convention lists a number of wastes that are prohibited from disposal at sea except under a permit issued by a contracting party. It was the first global treaty to control the disposal of wastes at sea. It will eventually be replaced by the more modern London Protocol, which prohibits the disposal at sea of *all* wastes, and only provides a very short list of wastes that can be disposed of under a permit. Canada is a Party to both the London Convention and the London Protocol, but it only implements the more stringent

Protocol, which is deemed to meet the requirements of both treaties.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Prevention of marine pollution from dumping.

Better knowledge of state of environment and sustainable use of resources through monitoring and reporting.

CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

Canada has been actively involved in the treaty from its development and participated in its negotiation.

Environment and Climate Change Canada implements the London Convention by implementing the London Protocol, which is deemed to meet the requirements of both treaties.

Canada meets its obligations under the Protocol and Convention through the Canadian Environmental

Protection Act. It assesses wastes, controls disposal, monitors disposal sites, and reports to the London Protocol and Convention at annual meetings.

RESULTS / PROGRESS

Activities

Parties meet annually in the fall for policy and in the spring for science and technical aspects in conjunction with the Parties to the London Protocol.

Intercessional work is also conducted to advance positions, guidance, reporting, and technical cooperation and assistance.

Reports

Reports on disposal activities and disposal site monitoring activities are required regularly.