



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

London Protocol on Prevention of Marine Pollution (Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter)

SUBJECT CATEGORY:

Marine / Oceans

TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:

Multilateral

FORM:

Legally-binding treaty

STATUS:

- Parties adopted the London Protocol as a new stand-alone treaty November 8, 1996 at the Special Meeting of the Parties to the 1972 London Convention.
- Canada acceded to the Protocol May 15, 2000.
- London Protocol entered into force March 24, 2006 (operates in parallel with older London Convention).
- As of 2022 there are 53 Parties to the London Protocol and there are now 100 parties when membership of both London Protocol and Convention are combined.

LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:

Lead Department: Environment and Climate Change Canada

Partner Departments: Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), Transport Canada (TC).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**Web Links:**

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

Contacts:

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

COMPENDIUM EDITION:

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PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

The London Protocol controls marine pollution by prohibiting the disposal of wastes at sea. Only a very short list of wastes can be disposed of, and only after they have been assessed and issued a permit.

The 1972 London Convention stopped the dumping of industrial waste at sea. The newer Protocol will replace the Convention. The Protocol is taking action to address marine pollution issues like plastic pollution. Through amendments it is advancing climate change issues including governing storage of carbon dioxide in the sub-seabed. It is also the first global treaty to agree on controls for marine geoengineering activities like ocean fertilization, which can cause severe effects in very large areas of the ocean that last a very long time.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the London Protocol is to protect and preserve the marine environment from all sources of pollution and take effective measures according to scientific, technical, and economic capabilities to prevent, reduce and, where practicable, eliminate pollution caused by dumping.

The Protocol is a full treaty intended to eventually replace the 1972 London Convention.

KEY ELEMENTS

The Protocol prohibits the disposal at sea of wastes and other matter except under a permit issued by a contracting Party.

Under the older London Convention, disposal of certain wastes are prohibited while under the London Protocol all wastes are prohibited from disposal at sea. Only a small list of low risk wastes can be considered for permits; a site-specific assessment must be conducted before a permit is issued.

Protocol Parties must:

- prohibit dumping and operate a permit system;

- implement a precautionary approach to environmental protection;
- take into account the polluter pays principle;
- not transfer damage from one component of the environment to another;
- prohibit the export of wastes for dumping at sea and incineration at sea of wastes;
- keep records and monitor, enforce, and report on actions under the Protocol;
- provide technical assistance to other parties on a voluntary basis; and
- promote development of international measures to protect the marine environment from all sources of pollution.

Amendments include permits for sub seabed storage of carbon dioxide streams (in force) and a new permit system for ocean fertilization research (not yet in force).

EXPECTED RESULTS

Prevention of marine pollution from dumping.

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

Shared guidance on assessment and monitoring.

Enabling of sub-seabed storage of CO₂ and its export to other countries for storage (new resolution taken to activate the ability to export CO₂)

Further regulation of ocean fertilization (when amendments enter into force).

CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

Canada has been actively involved in the treaty from its development and participated in its negotiation, including recent amendments.

Environment and Climate Change Canada implements the London Protocol domestically and meets its obligations through the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

ECCC assesses wastes, controls disposal, monitors disposal sites, and reports to the London Protocol at annual meetings.

RESULTS / PROGRESS

Activities

Parties meet annually in the fall for policy and in the spring for science and technical aspects. Canada hosted the London Protocol and Convention science meeting for the first time in 2019.

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

Since entry into force in 2006, the London Protocol was amended twice (2006, 2009) to enable storage of carbon dioxide in sub-seabed formations. A 2019 resolution allows countries to begin using the 2009 amendment that allows export of carbon dioxide for storage in another country according to the process set under the Protocol.

The London Protocol was also amended in 2013 to further regulate ocean fertilization.

In 2016, a new strategic plan was adopted setting out targets to further improve marine pollution prevention by 2022.

Reports

[Reports on disposal activities and disposal site monitoring activities](#) are required annually. Reports on legislation and compliance are required regularly.