



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

### *Agreement on Environmental Cooperation among the Governments of the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada (ECA)*

**SUBJECT CATEGORY:**

Environmental Cooperation

**TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:**

Regional

**FORM:**

Legally binding treaty

**STATUS:**

- Signed by Canada: December 18, 2018
- Ratified by Canada: April 2, 2020
- In force in Canada: July 1, 2020
- In force internationally: July 1, 2020

**LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:**

**Lead:** Environment and Climate Change Canada

**Partner:** Global Affairs Canada

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

- [Text of the Agreement](#)
- [Commission for Environmental Cooperation](#)

**Contacts:**

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

**COMPENDIUM EDITION:**

February 2022

**PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY**

The ECA, signed in parallel to the *Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement* (CUSMA), is a legally binding mechanism for environmental cooperation between Canada, the United States and Mexico. The ECA requires the three countries to maintain high levels of domestic environmental protection.

The ECA ensures that the unique institutions that have existed since 1994 under the *North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation* (NAAEC) are retained and modernized, including the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) and its Montreal-based Secretariat. Through the ECA, a modernized CEC will continue the legacy of effective trilateral environmental cooperation between Canada, Mexico, and the United States, including on global environmental issues of importance to Canada, such as climate change.

**OBJECTIVE**

This Agreement aims to promote sustainable development, encourage pollution prevention policies and practices, conserve biological diversity and enhance compliance with environmental laws and regulations.

The ECA promotes transparency and public participation, with the objective of enhancing environmental performance of each country and furthering trilateral environmental cooperation.

The ECA modernizes and enhances trilateral cooperation, including by supporting implementation of the environment commitments in the CUSMA.

**KEY ELEMENTS**

The ECA requires that each Party ensure its laws provide for high levels of environmental protection without lowering standards to attract trade and investment.

Each Party must promote environmental education, research, and development; assess environmental impacts; and promote the use of economic instruments.

The ECA modernized the CEC (established under the NAAEC) comprised of a Council, a Secretariat and a Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC).

The Council is the CEC's governing body comprised of cabinet-level representatives of the Parties. For Canada, the CEC Council member is the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

The Secretariat supports the Council and related committees. The Secretariat also administers the [submissions on enforcement matters](#) (SEMs) process, which allows individuals or organizations in North America to file a written complaint asserting that any of the three countries is failing to effectively enforce an environmental law.

The JPAC is composed of nine individuals (three appointed by each Council member) and provides advice to the Council on matters within the scope of the ECA. It can also serve as a source of information for the Secretariat. The JPAC promotes active public participation and transparency in all activities under the ECA.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

The ECA allows the three countries to establish a work program in which they can develop cooperative activities on a broad range of issues. These include:

- strengthening environmental governance;
- reducing pollution and supporting strong, low emissions, resilient economies;
- conserving and protecting biodiversity and habitats;
- supporting green growth and sustainable development; and
- promoting the sustainable management and use of natural resources.

The ECA also supports the CUSMA environmental provisions by establishing a level playing field to avoid trade distortions and promote environmental cooperation.

## CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

Through the ECA, Canada demonstrates its commitment to addressing potential environmental impacts from North American trade. The trilateral pursuit of environmental cooperation is consistent with our highly integrated North American economy. This work supports the protection and promotion of Canada's environmental interests internationally. In particular, it supports the expected result that Canada's relations

with other governments and partners are effectively managed in support of environmental priorities.

## RESULTS / PROGRESS

### Activities

In September 2021, the United States virtually hosted the 28<sup>th</sup> CEC Council session. The theme of the Council Session was *Climate Change and Environmental Justice Solutions*, which focused on highlighting the importance of addressing climate impacts and protecting the health of our communities, including those vulnerable communities that are facing disproportionate impacts. The 29<sup>th</sup> CEC Council session is scheduled to take place in summer of 2022, in Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico.

### Reports

Canada provides input on its environmental actions for inclusion in the [CEC Annual Reports](#). Canada has provided input on its environmental actions for inclusion in the Annual Reports of the CEC (22 published in total) to ensure compliance with the NAAEC.

### Results

The three Parties endorsed the [2021-2025 Strategic Plan](#), which sets out the strategic priorities and objectives for the CEC to address key regional environmental challenges and to complement the work of each of our governments domestically and internationally.