# Code of Practice for the Environmental Management of Road Salts

Overview of Data Reported for 2014-2020 in the Context of National Targets

January 2022





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Email: enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca

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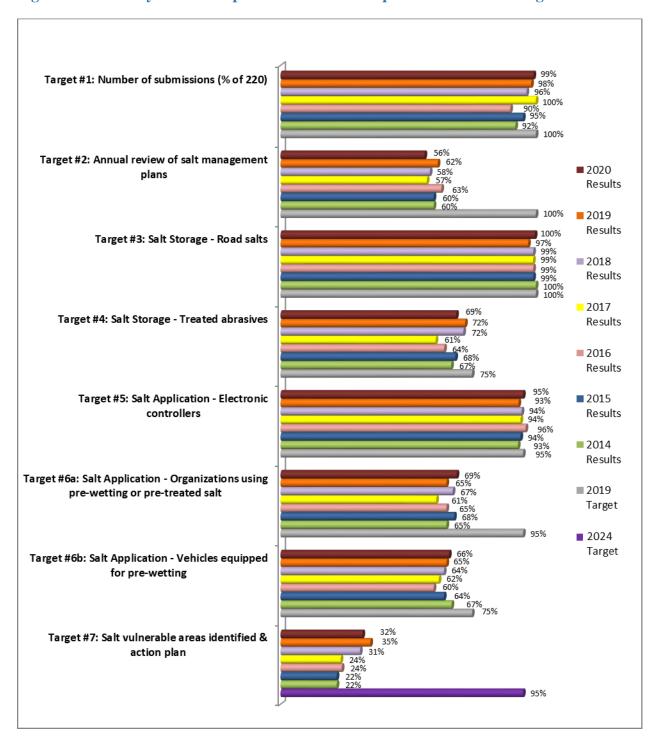


## **Overview**

In December 2014, Environment and Climate Change Canada set seven Performance Indicators and National Targets in order to monitor the effectiveness of the Code of Practice for the Environmental Management of Road Salts (the Code).

The following results (Figure A) have been reported by federal, provincial, municipal and private road organizations that adopted the Code and are compared with the National Targets (#1-6) set for 2019 (Target #7 is set for 2024). Data submitted in annual reports are compiled and analyzed for a winter period, which is generally from November of one year to April of the next year. Throughout the report, a reporting year is represented by the final year of that winter (e.g. 2020 represents the winter starting in 2019 and ending in 2020). Note that some year-to-year variation in results exists due to variance in the number of reports submitted annually.

Figure A: Summary results for performance and comparison to national targets



## **Highlights\*: 2020 Reported Data in the Context of National Targets**

## Results reported for winter **2019-2020**:

- 218 road organizations, including 8 provinces, 1 territory, 194 municipalities, 5 private road organizations, 10 national parks and other federal organizations, reported under the Code (target is 220).
- o 56% annually reviewed their road salt management plan (target is 100%).
- o 100% of their road salts are under a permanent roof and on impermeable pads (target is 100%).
- o 69% of their treated abrasives are covered (target is 75%).
- o 95% of their vehicles are equipped with groundspeed electronic controllers (target is 95%).
- o 69% are using pre-wetting or pre-treated salts (target is 95%).
- o 66% of their vehicles are equipped for pre-wetting (target is 75%).
- o 32% of road organizations have identified their salt-vulnerable areas and have prepared an action plan (target is 95%, set for 2024).

<sup>\*</sup> See Annex 1 for highlights of past reporting seasons

# **Background**

The Code of Practice for the Environmental Management of Road Salts (the Code) was developed in 2004 to assist municipal and provincial road organizations to better manage their use of road salts in a way that reduces the harm to the environment while maintaining roadway safety. The Code recommends that road organizations that use over 500 t/year of salt or who have salt-vulnerable areas in their territory review their existing winter maintenance operations to improve practices and reduce adverse impacts of salt releases in the environment. This includes the development and implementation of salt management plans identifying actions they will take to improve practices in salt storage, use of salts on roads, snow disposal and protection of salt-vulnerable areas. In addition, the Code requires road organizations to provide an annual report<sup>1</sup> on the progress achieved.

Of note, in Quebec, a Strategy for the Environmental Management of Road Salts was launched in 2010. Every administration that manages and maintains roads in Quebec is invited to participate in the Strategy on a voluntary basis. As a result, the federal Code is not implemented in Quebec. However, the general objectives of the Code and of the Strategy are similar. In 2019, the province conducted a five-year study during which an online questionnaire was made available to all municipalities to learn about best management practices in place. Sixty-four municipalities responded to the questionnaire. The survey results are published on the Quebec Strategy website (<a href="https://www.transports.gouv.qc.ca/fr/gestion-environnementale-sels-voirie/bilan-quebecois/Pages/default.aspx">https://www.transports.gouv.qc.ca/fr/gestion-environnementale-sels-voirie/bilan-quebecois/Pages/default.aspx</a>; French only).

## **Results**

The Five-year Review of Progress<sup>2</sup> (2005–2009) to measure the effectiveness of the Code was published in April 2012 and is available online. Based on the review, Environment and Climate Change Canada recommended maintaining the Code and encouraged road organizations to continue improving their salt management. However, at the time of the first review, the lack of targets created challenges in determining whether the objective of the Code had been achieved. It was recommended that the list of performance indicators for future evaluations be examined to ensure that they reflect key components of the Code and current techniques in winter maintenance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The information is submitted directly to Environment and Climate Change Canada through its <u>Single Window Information Manager System</u> (ECCC's SWIM) by June 30 of each year.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See report: Five Year Review of Progress: Code of Practice for the Environmental Management of Road Salts (Environment Canada, 2012).

In 2014, Environment and Climate Change Canada published Performance Indicators and National Targets for the Code of Practice for the Environmental Management of Road Salts for the implementation of best practices so that progress can be tracked and the success of the Code can be evaluated. The main objective for setting national targets was to increase environmental protection. All road organizations are expected to reach a minimum level of progress in the implementation of best practices to prevent and reduce negative impacts from road salts. National targets help to monitor progress in specific areas of the Code and form the basis for the second evaluation of the Code currently underway.

There are seven performance indicators (with six targets set for 2019 and one for 2024) that fall under four main activities of the Code (adoption of the Code, salt storage, salt application and salt-vulnerable areas) as summarized and illustrated above (Figure A). The following results are based on the analysis of data reported annually by road organizations under the Code since 2009 where available, and therefore include data reported before and after the publication of the national targets in 2014.

• Performance indicator 1: "Submission of annual reports" represents the number of road organizations reporting regularly (Figure B). The purpose of this indicator is to increase the level of implementation of the Code and best practices in road salt management. Data reported prior to 2009 are referenced in this indicator to illustrate progress over time. Overall, the number of submissions has increased since 2011 and exceeded the target in 2017. Table 1 also presents the breakdown of organizations by type that have reported since winter 2014. Annex 2 presents the list of road organizations that reported in 2020.

Figure B: Number of reports submitted by road organizations to Environment and Climate Change Canada

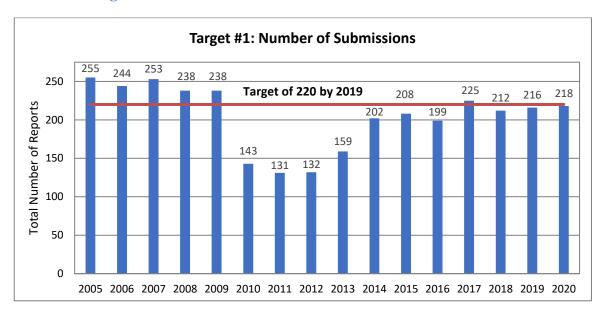


Table B: Breakdown of the type of road organizations that have reported under the Code for winter seasons 2014 through 2020

Type of road organization	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Provinces and territories	8	8	9	9	9	9	9
Municipalities	180	184	175	200	187	189	194
National parks and other federal organizations	10	11	10	10	11	11	10
Private organizations	4	5	5	6	5	7	5
Total number of reporting organizations	202	208	199	225	212	216	218

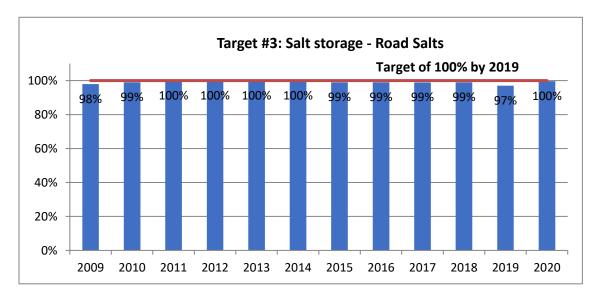
• Performance indicator 2: "Annual review of salt management plan" represents the percentage of road organizations that annually review their salt management plan when compared to all organizations that report to the code (Figure C). The objective of this indicator is to ensure that planning is current and allows for continuous improvement. Road organizations should revisit their salt management plan at the end of each winter in order to identify shortcomings, issues and areas where improvements are needed prior to the start of the next winter season. Information on the annual review of salt management plans is not available for 2009 to 2012.

Figure C: Percentage of road organizations that review their salt management plan



• **Performance indicator 3: "Storage of road salts"** represents the percentage in tonnes of road salts stored under a permanent roof and on impermeable pads (Figure D). The objective of this indicator is to ensure that road organizations have committed to managing their material storage facilities and that best practices are applied at point sources to prevent the release of salt to the environment. During the data analysis for this target, an error was identified in the calculation. This has changed the results reported for this target in 2018 and 2019 from those that were presented in previous reports.

Figure D: Percentage of road salts stored under a permanent roof and on impermeable pads



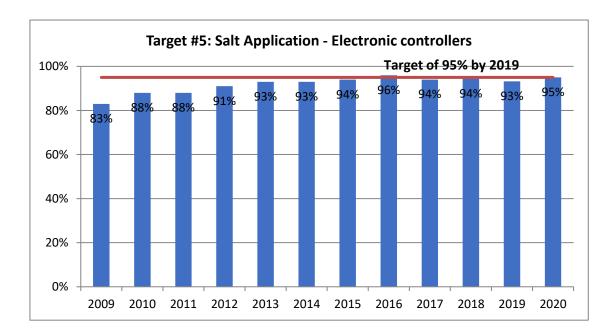
• Performance indicator 4: "Storage of treated abrasives" represents the percentage in tonnes of treated abrasives (blended sand and salt) that are stored under cover, either under a tarp or under a permanent roof (Figure E). The objective of this indicator is to ensure that road organizations properly cover their treated abrasives in storage facilities and that best practices are applied at point sources to prevent the release of salt to the environment. Detail on the type of cover (tarp or permanent roof) is not available for 2009-2012. During the data analysis for this target, an error was identified in the calculation that had resulted in an overestimation of coverage for a large organization. Resolution of this error and data clarification with this organization has changed the results reported for this target from 2014 to 2020 from those that were presented in previous reports.

**Target #4: Salt Storage - Treated Abrasives** ■ % covered ■ % covered by tarp ■ % covered by permanent roof 100% Target of 75% by 2019 80% 67% 69% 72% 69% 68% 72% 66% 64% 62% 61% 57% 56% 60% 40% 20% 0% 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

Figure E: Percentage of treated abrasives stored under cover

• Performance indicator 5: "Groundspeed electronic controllers" represents the percentage of vehicles equipped with groundspeed electronic controllers when compared to the total number of vehicles assigned to solid salt application (Figure F). The objective of this indicator is to ensure that salt is applied at a proper rate regardless of the speed of the truck being used to spread the salt and that salt stops discharging when the truck is stopped. Over time use of this technology is expected to become a core practice for all organizations to optimize the use of salt. The percentage of vehicles equipped with groundspeed electronic controllers has increased since 2009 and reached the target in both 2016 and 2020.

Figure F: Percentage of vehicles equipped with groundspeed electronic controllers



**Performance indicator 6: "Optimization of salt application"** indicates if organizations are adopting practices that enhance their salt application techniques to optimize their use of salt either by using pre-wetting and/or pre-treated salts (Figure G) or by increasing their pre-wetting capacity (Figure H). The objective of this indicator is to ensure that organizations are using advanced technologies such as pre-wetting to reduce the use of salts and pre-treated materials proven to be a cost-effective alternative to road salts with similar results. While data for use of pre-wetting are available for all years since 2009, data for use of pre-treated salts are not available for 2009-2012. During the data analysis, an error was identified in the calculation for target 6a that resulted in an overestimation of the organizations that use pre-wetting or pre-treated salts. This error was corrected for all years and changed the results for this target in 2013, 2014, 2017 and 2020 from those presented in previous reports. In addition, an error was identified in the analysis for target 6b, as the percentage of vehicles equipped for prewetting was being calculated based on all reporting organizations rather than only those who reported pre-wetting. This error resulted in an underestimation of the results and has now been corrected for all years (2009 to 2020) from those presented in previous reports.

Figure G: Percentage of road organizations using pre-wetting or pre-treated salts

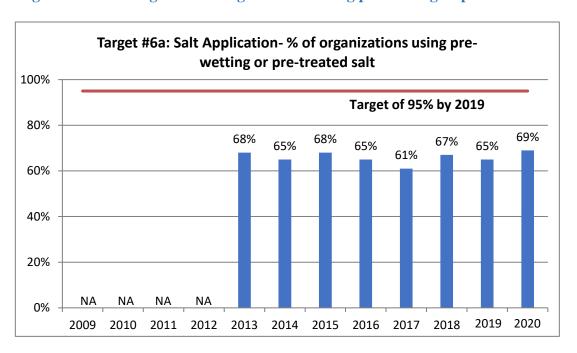
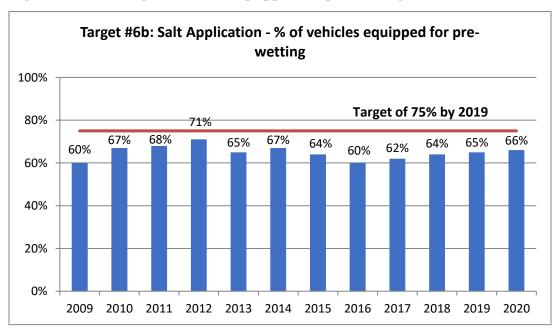


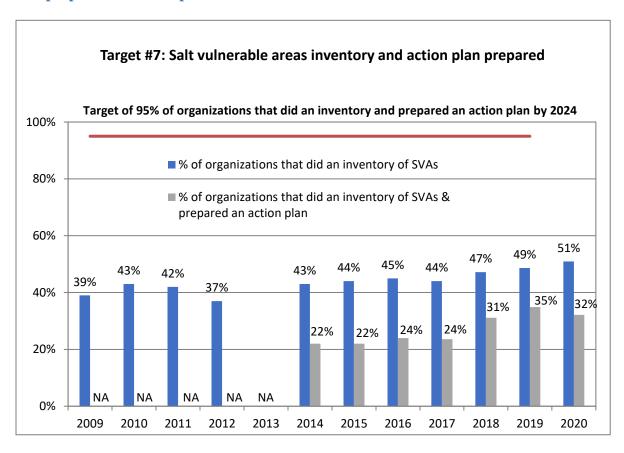
Figure H: Percentage of vehicles equipped for pre-wetting



• **Performance indicator 7: "Salt-vulnerable areas"** indicates if organizations have identified salt-vulnerable areas and if an action plan has been prepared with the purpose of protecting those areas that are particularly sensitive to road salts. While information on identification of salt-vulnerable areas is available for all years except 2013 (due to data collection inconsistencies), information on preparation of an action plan is not available for 2009-2013. Figure I presents the percentage of road organizations that have identified

salt vulnerable areas, as well as the percentage of road organizations that have met the performance indicator (both identifying vulnerable areas and preparing action plans). To help achieve this target, Environment and Climate Change Canada is developing additional guidance to establish common standards for identification of salt-vulnerable areas. As such, it should be noted that the target for this indicator is set for 2024.

Figure I: Percentage of road organizations that have identified salt vulnerable areas and prepared an action plan



#### **Progress Towards the National Targets**

Setting national targets offers transparency in the expected performance level from road organizations and provides a basis for conducting the second review of the effectiveness of the Code. National targets assist road organizations in prioritizing their ongoing efforts in the management of road salts.

The summary of the results of the Code since 2015, provided in Figure A, shows the progression in achieving national targets over time. While some targets set for 2020 are achieved or close to being achieved (Targets #1, #3, #4 and #5), others are not (Targets #2, #6a and #6b). Results presented in this overview report will inform the review of the effectiveness of the Code. The

review will also identify potential barriers for reaching the established targets and actions for consideration to improve Code implementation and the environmental management of road salt.

Environment and Climate Change Canada will continue to promote the implementation of the Code with stakeholders, consisting of provincial and municipal road authorities, federal and provincial governments, related associations, industry, environmental non-governmental organizations, and academics, in order to encourage the implementation of best practices in road salt management and prevent or reduce negative impacts of road salts on the environment.

## **Contact Us**

For questions about the Code or for more information about salt management, please contact us.

## Annex 1: Highlights of reported data for 2014 to 2020 reporting seasons

## **Highlights: 2020 Reported Data in the Context of National Targets**

## Results reported for winter 2019-2020:

- o 218 road organizations, including 8 provinces, 1 territory, 194 municipalities, 5 private road organizations, 10 national parks and other federal organizations, reported under the Code (target is 220).
- o 56% annually reviewed their road salt management plan (target is 100%).
- o 100% of their road salts are under a permanent roof and on impermeable pads (target is 100%).
- o 69% of their treated abrasives are covered (target is 75%).
- o 95% of their vehicles are equipped with groundspeed electronic controllers (target is 95%).
- o 69% are using pre-wetting or pre-treated salts (target is 95%).
- o 66% of their vehicles are equipped for pre-wetting (target is 75%).
- o 32% of road organizations have identified their salt-vulnerable areas and have prepared an action plan (target is 95%, set for 2024).

#### **Highlights: 2019 Reported Data in the Context of National Targets**

#### Results reported for winter **2018-2019**:

- o 216 road organizations, including 8 provinces, 1 territory, 189 municipalities, 7 private road organizations, 8 national parks and 3 other federal organizations, reported under the Code (target is 220).
- o 62% annually reviewed their road salt management plan (target is 100%).
- o 97% of their road salts are under a permanent roof and on impermeable pads (target is 100%).
- o 72% of their treated abrasives are covered (target is 75%).
- o 93% of their vehicles are equipped with groundspeed electronic controllers (target is 95%).
- o 65% are using pre-wetting or pre-treated salts (target is 95%).
- o 65% of their vehicles are equipped for pre-wetting (target is 75%).
- o 35% of road organizations have identified their salt-vulnerable areas and have prepared an action plan (target is 95%, set for 2024).

#### **Highlights: 2018 Reported Data in the Context of National Targets**

#### Results reported for winter 2017-2018:

- 212 road organizations, including 8 provinces, 1 territory, 187 municipalities, 5 private road organizations, 8 national parks and 3 other federal organizations, reported under the Code (target is 220).
- o 58% annually reviewed their road salt management plan (target is 100%).
- o 99% of their road salts are under a permanent roof and on impermeable pads (target is 100%).
- o 72% of their treated abrasives are covered (target is 75%).
- o 94% of their vehicles are equipped with groundspeed electronic controllers (target is 95%).
- o 67% are using pre-wetting or pre-treated salts (target is 95%).
- o 64% of their vehicles are equipped for pre-wetting (target is 75%).
- o 31% of road organizations have identified their salt-vulnerable areas and have prepared an action plan (target is 95%, set for 2024).

## **Highlights: 2017 Reported Data in the Context of National Targets**

## Results reported for winter **2016-2017**:

- 225 road organizations, including 8 provinces, 1 territory, 200 municipalities, 6 private road organizations, 7 national parks and 3 other federal organizations, reported under the Code (target is 220).
- o 57% annually reviewed their road salt management plan (target is 100%).
- o 99% of their road salts are under a permanent roof and on impermeable pads (target is 100%).
- o 61% of their treated abrasives are covered (target is 75%).
- o 94% of their vehicles are equipped with groundspeed electronic controllers (target is 95%).
- o 61% are using pre-wetting or pre-treated salts (target is 95%).
- o 62% of their vehicles are equipped for pre-wetting (target is 75%).
- o 24% of road organizations have identified their salt-vulnerable areas and have prepared an action plan (target is 95%, set for 2024).

## **Highlights: 2016 Reported Data in the Context of National Targets**

#### Results reported for winter **2015-2016**:

- 199 road organizations, including 8 provinces, 1 territory, 175 municipalities, 5 private road organizations, 6 national parks and 4 other federal organizations, reported under the Code (target is 220).
- o 63% annually reviewed their road salt management plan (target is 100%).
- o 99% of their road salts are under a permanent roof and on impermeable pads (target is 100%).
- o 64% of their treated abrasives are covered (target is 75%).
- o 96% of their vehicles are equipped with groundspeed electronic controllers (target is 95%).
- o 65% are using pre-wetting or pre-treated salts (target is 95%).
- o 60% of their vehicles are equipped for pre-wetting (target is 75%).
- o 24% of road organizations have identified their salt-vulnerable areas and have prepared an action plan (target is 95%, set for 2024).

## **Highlights: 2015 Reported Data in the Context of National Targets**

## Results reported for winter **2014-2015**:

- 208 road organizations, including 8 provinces, 184 municipalities, 5 private road organizations,
   7 national parks and 4 other federal organizations, reported under the Code (target is 220).
- o 60% annually reviewed their road salt management plan (target is 100%).
- o 99% of their road salts are under a permanent roof and on impermeable pads (target is 100%).
- o 68% of their treated abrasives are covered (target is 75%).
- o 94% of their vehicles are equipped with groundspeed electronic controllers (target is 95%).
- o 68% are using pre-wetting or pre-treated salts (target is 95%).
- o 64% of their vehicles are equipped for pre-wetting (target is 75%).
- o 22% of road organizations have identified their salt-vulnerable areas and have prepared an action plan (target is 95%, set for 2024).

## **Highlights: 2014 Reported Data in the Context of National Targets**

#### Results reported for winter 2013-2014:

- o 202 road organizations, including 8 provinces, 180 municipalities, 4 private road organizations, 7 national parks and 3 other federal organizations, reported under the Code (target is 220).
- o 60% annually reviewed their road salt management plan (target is 100%).
- o 100% of their road salts are under a permanent roof and on impermeable pads (target is 100%).
- o 67% of their treated abrasives are covered (target is 75%).
- o 93% of their vehicles are equipped with groundspeed electronic controllers (target is 95%).
- o 65% are using pre-wetting or pre-treated salts (target is 95%).
- o 67% of their vehicles are equipped for pre-wetting (target is 75%).
- o 22% of road organizations have identified their salt-vulnerable areas and have prepared an action plan (target is 95%, set for 2024).

Annex 2: Road organizations that have reported under the Code of Practice for 2019-2020

Federal Organ	izations				
Cape Breton Highlands National Park, Nova Scotia (Parks Canada) Fundy National Park, New Brunswick (Parks Canada)					
	Kouchibouguac National Park, New Brunswick (Parks Canada)				
Parks Canada A					
	(ational Park, Saskatchewan (Parks Canada)				
	nd Government Services Canada				
	in National Park, Manitoba (Parks Canada)				
	ional Park, Newfoundland and Labrador (Parks Canada)				
	remational Bridge Corporation Ltd., Ontario				
· ·	s National Park, Alberta (Parks Canada)				
	Territorial Organizations				
Alberta Transpo					
	ia Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure				
	structure & Transportation				
	C Department of Transportation and Infrastructure				
	pt. of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal				
	y of Transportation				
	Island Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy				
	Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure				
Yukon Territori	ial Government				
Municipal Org	ganizations				
Province	Organization Name				
Alberta	Brazeau County				
	City of Airdrie				
	City of Calgary				
	City of Edmonton				
	City of Lacombe				
	City of Leduc				
	City of Lethbridge				
	City of Medicine Hat				
	City of Red Deer				
	City of St. Albert				
	Clearwater County				
County of St. Paul No. 19					
Cypress County					
	Lac La Biche County				
Lacombe County					
Mackenzie County					
	Municipal District of Foothills No. 31				

	Municipal District of Wainwright
	Northern Sunrise County
	Strathcona County
	Town of Okotoks
	Weslock County
British	City of Castlegar
Columbia	City of Chilliwack
	City of Coquitlam
	City of Kamloops
	City of Kelowna
	City of Langley
	City of Maple Ridge
	City of Nanaimo
	City of New Westminster
	City of Penticton
	City of Port Alberni
	City of Port Coquitlam
	City of Port Moody
	City of Prince George
	City of Surrey
	City of Vancouver
	City of Williams Lake
	Corporation of the District of North Cowichan
	District of North Saanich
	District of North Vancouver
	District of Saanich
	District of West Vancouver
	The Corporation of the City of North Vancouver
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New	Caraquet
Brunswick	City of Fredericton
	City of Moncton
	Town of Dalhousie
	Town of Grand Bay-Westfield
	Town Of Hampton
	Town of Quispsmsis
	Town of Riverview
	Town of Saint Andrews
	Town Of Shediac
	Town of Sussex
	Ville de Dieppe
Newfoundland	City of Corner Brook
and Labrador	City Of Mount Pearl
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	Town of Gander		
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Nova Scotia			
Nova Scotta	Cape Breton Regional Unifor Regional Municipality		
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	Town of Digby		
	Town of Windsor		
	Town of Wolfville		
	Town of Yarmouth		
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	City of Hamilton		
	City of Markham		
	City of Mississauga		
	City of Ottawa		
	City of Owen Sound		
	City of Peterborough		
	City of Pickering		
	City of Sarnia		
	City of Sault Ste. Marie		
	City of Thunder Bay		
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	Corporation of the City of Guelph		
	Corporation of the City of Kitchener		
	Corporation of the City of London		
	Corporation of the City of North Bay		
	Corporation of the City of Oshawa		
	Corporation of the City of Port Colborne		
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Corporation of the Township of Scugog
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Corporation of the Township of Whitewater Region
Corporation of the Township of Wilmot
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	Municipality of Whitchurch-Stouffville
	Oxford County
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	Region of Waterloo, Waste Management Division
	Regional Municipality of Durham
	Regional Municipality of Niagara
	The Regional Municipality of York
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	The Township of Blandford-Blenheim
	Town of Ajax
	Town of Arnprior
	Town of East Gwillimbury
	Town of Greater Napanee
	Town of Ingersoll
	Town of Innisfil
	Town of Kingsville
	Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
	Town of Oakville
	Town of Renfrew
	Town of Richmond Hill
	Town of Wasaga Beach
	Town of Whitby
	Township of Admaston/Bromley
	Township of Bonnechere Valley
	Township of Dawn-Euphemia
	Township of Puslinch
	Township of Selwyn
	Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls
	Township of South Glengarry
	Township of Springwater
	Township of Stirling-Rawdon
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Private Organizations		
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Chinook Highway Operations Inc.		
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Additional information can be obtained at:

Environment and Climate Change Canada Public Inquiries Centre 7th Floor, Fontaine Building 200 Sacré-Coeur Boulevard Gatineau QC K1A 0H3

Telephone: 1-800-668-6767 (in Canada only) or 819-997-2800

Email: enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca

