

***The Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* and the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Sources of Pollution**

What is marine pollution?

The following definitions are included in Part 7, Division 2 of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* (CEPA 1999):

- **"land-based sources"** - point and diffuse sources on land that release substances or energy to the sea by water, through the air, or directly from the coast. They include any sources under the sea bed that come from land by tunnel, pipeline, or other means.
- **"marine pollution"** - substances or energy directly or indirectly introduced into the sea by humans that result or may result in:
 - hazards to human health;
 - harm to living resources or marine ecosystems;
 - damage to amenities; or
 - interference with other legitimate uses of the sea.

The major threats to the health, productivity and biodiversity of the marine environment result from human activities on land, both in coastal areas and further inland. About 80 percent of the pollution load in the oceans originates from land-based activities such as municipal, industrial, and agricultural wastes and run-off, and from atmospheric deposition. These contaminants affect the most productive areas of the marine environment, including estuaries and nearshore coastal waters.

Who protects Canada's marine environment?

All Canadians have a responsibility to protect Canada's marine environment. The legislative responsibility is shared by all levels of government, with numerous activities under way and others being developed. The CEPA 1999 provisions are intended to complement existing regulatory measures by enabling the Minister of the Environment to issue environmental objectives, guidelines, and codes of practice to prevent and reduce marine pollution from land-based sources. Such steps would be taken only after consultation with any other federal ministers affected.

Canada's National Programme of Action

Mindful of the reality of shared responsibility and the cost-effectiveness of building on existing programs, Environment Canada is working with other federal departments (including Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada), coastal Provinces and the Territories to implement Canada's National Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (NPA).

The objective of Canada's NPA is to prevent pollution from land-based sources and to protect habitat in the nearshore or coastal zone. It responds to an international call to protect the marine environment through coordinated action at local, regional, national and global levels. It also responds to the expectations of Canadians for clean coasts and oceans.

Canada's goals under the NPA are to:

- protect human health;
- reduce the degradation of the marine environment;
- remediate damaged areas;
- promote the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources; and
- maintain the productive capacity and biodiversity of the marine environment.

Further information

Internet:

www.ec.gc.ca/ceparegistry.

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