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review

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL ROUND TABLE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY

First meeting of National Forum on Climate Change

On February 16 and 17 in Ottawa, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy convened the first session of its National Forum on Climate Change. The goal of the Forum is to provide advice on what information Canadians will need in order to better understand climate change and to become part of the solution.

Climate change is one of today's most crucial environmental and economic issues. Although uncertainty remains, there is consensus that the build-up of human-generated greenhouse gases in the atmosphere could have a major impact on the world's weather patterns, ecosystems and economic activity. At the same time, efforts to limit global greenhouse gas emissions may have serious implications for Canadian energy producers, energy-intensive industries and consumers.

The Forum is, in part, a response to the Conference of the Parties — Third Round (COP3) held in Kyoto, Japan last December, at which all of the world's developed countries, including Canada, signed an international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If the protocol is ratified, meeting the new targets will require decisive action and a sustained commitment from all levels of government, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and individual Canadians.

One of the most difficult aspects of the climate change challenge is the uncertainty in tracing the implications of climate change and defining the outcomes of policy action or inaction. The focus of the National Forum on



PM greets Forum member and Olympic Gold Medallist Michelle Cameron and her daughter, Jacqueline.

Climate Change is on framing the issue in the face of this uncertainty.

The Forum brings together a citizens' panel of 26 respected Canadians to hear the full range of expert opinion and knowledge about climate change. The Forum members — all of whom have received the Order of Canada or the Meritorious Service Decoration — have been recognized for their outstanding service in such areas as community volunteerism, philanthropy, visual arts, sports, education, health care and business. Since none of the Forum members are experts in the field of climate change, they bring to the table an unbiased, representative perspective.

At the Forum's first meeting, the Honourable Christine Stewart, Minister of the Environment, underscored the government's commitment to action and to outreach and public education about the issue. "The task ahead for the National Forum on Climate Change is important, and I congratulate the National Round Table on taking this innovative approach to reaching out to Canadians."

In his address, the Honourable Ralph Goodale, Minister of Natural Resources, stressed the importance of involving all sectors — including business, industry, labour, non-governmental organizations, all levels of government, academe and communities — in a national implementation plan. As the Minister responsible for developing a national implementation plan in response to Kyoto, Goodale said his first objective would be to build a broad-based public consensus on Canada's response to climate change. "Everybody has a stake in how we tackle climate change," he said. "We'll all be affected, and we should all have our say."

The Forum's co-Chairs are two Round Table members — Elizabeth May, Executive Director of the Sierra Club of Canada, and Dee Parkinson-Marcoux, President of Gulf Heavy Oil. They explained the Forum's objectives and proposed process, emphasizing the essential role that participants will play in setting the stage for public discussion. It is expected that the Forum will address such issues as the nature ►

National Round Table
on the Environment
and the Economy

Canada Building, 344 Slater Street, Suite 200
Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1R 7Y3

Tel./Tél. : (613) 992-7189 • Fax/Téléc. : (613) 992-7385 • Email/Courrier électronique : admin@nrtree-tree.ca • Web : <http://www.nrtree-tree.ca>

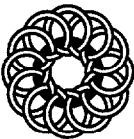


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sur l'environnement
et l'économie

Édifice Canada, 344, rue Slater, bureau 200
Ottawa [Ontario] Canada K1R 7Y3

and extent of the problem; current and potential environmental, economic and social impacts; choices and trade-offs that Canadians may face in addressing the issue; and the nature of the methods to be used in dealing with climate change.

Prime Minister Chrétien thanked the members of the Forum for their contribution of time and effort in a difficult task. Meeting the goals set in Kyoto will not be easy, Mr. Chrétien advised, and will require the collective will of all Canadians. Furthermore, the actions taken by Canada "must be done intelligently," in a way that contributes to economic growth.

At the first meeting of the Forum, members heard a wide range of perspectives on the environmental and economic implications of climate change (see below for a list of speakers and presentation topics). The Forum will meet again in Ottawa on March 9-10, and April 6-7. Experts and interest group representatives will discuss the challenges and opportunities that Canada may encounter as a result of the Kyoto summit, and highlight the long-term implications of the issue. At the end of the Forum process, panellists will issue a declaration about climate change, identifying

areas of certainty and uncertainty, and agreement and disagreement, and making general recommendations for possible actions.

NRTEE Chair, Dr. Stuart Smith, is the moderator of the Forum. He emphasized the important role of the Forum in providing an agreed-upon statement of the problem that will be the basis for debate when the time comes to introduce far-reaching measures. "It is essential that the upcoming public debate about climate change occur within a framework that has been established by respected, objective and non-partisan Canadians," said Dr. Smith.

Presentations

Evolution of Science and Policy on Climate Change

- James Bruce, former co-Chair of Economic and Social Aspects Working Group, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Kyoto Protocol to the Framework Convention on Climate Change — An Overview

- Gordon McBean, Assistant Deputy Minister, Atmospheric and Environmental Services, DOE

The Canada Country Study: Climate Impacts and Adaptation — Highlights

- Roger Street, Director, Environmental Adaptation Research Group, DOE

Canadians and Climate Change — A Social Researcher's View

- Doug Miller, President, Environics International

Implementing the Kyoto Protocol: An International Perspective

- James Cameron, Director, Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD)

Economic Costs and Opportunities: Decoding Economic Models

- Al Howatson, Conference Board of Canada
- Mark Jaccard, Simon Fraser University and B.C. Task Force on Electricity Reform

Issues for the Canadian Economy

- Thomas d'Aquino, President, Business Council on National Issues (BCNI)

For further information, please contact Nancy Averill at (613) 943-0399. ☎

Greening Canada's Brownfields

In urban centres across Canada, thousands of contaminated industrial sites lie abandoned or underutilized. Also known as brownfields, these sites are the legacy of a century of industrialization, and include such locations as decommissioned refineries, railway yards, abandoned gas stations and dilapidated warehouses. Many brownfield sites have the potential to be redeveloped for commercial, residential or recreational uses.

On February 24 in Toronto, the NRTEE announced the official release of *State of the Debate on the Environment and the Economy: Greening Canada's Brownfield Sites*. The report outlines the factors that discourage redevelopment of brownfield sites, and recommends actions that can be taken to promote their clean-up and development.

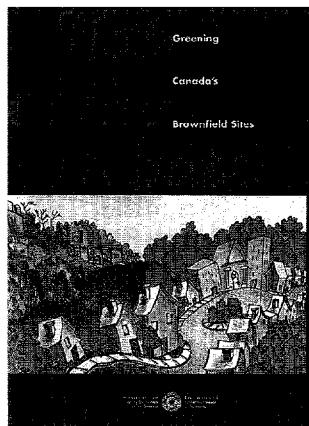
The result of multistakeholder consultations with developers and representatives from the financial services sector, the insurance

industry, First Nations, and environment-related non-governmental organizations, the report recommends initiatives such as limiting the liability of lenders, harmonizing and simplifying laws and standards governing contaminated sites, and improving data on the environmental condition of land. Other recom-

mendations address public education, leadership by all levels of government, and the development of other initiatives and partnerships.

Speaking at the report's launch, Angus Ross, Chair of the NRTEE's Financial Services Task Force, stressed the costs of inaction, pointing out that Metro Toronto foregoes estimated tax revenues of \$55 million a year because industrial-zoned lands are under-used. Mr. Ross also emphasized the potential for redevelopment initiatives to "revitalize downtown cores, limit urban sprawl and restore the tax base of inner cities."

Also appearing as panellists at the launch were Beth Benson, Project Director for Site Remediation, Waterfront Regeneration Trust; and Liseanne Forand, Executive Director of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME). Dr. Stuart Smith, Chair of the NRTEE, welcomed guests and served as co-moderator for the half-day event, which was attended by stakeholders and members of the media. ☎



Program Update

Measuring Eco-efficiency

The National Round Table on Environment and Economy (NRTEE) and leading North American companies are undertaking two feasibility studies in cooperation with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). These studies, which are designed to develop eco-efficiency indicators, will test the feasibility and value of material and energy intensity indicators, and pollutant dispersion indicators.

The NRTEE will host a forum on eco-efficiency indicators in Vancouver on March 17, 1998. The intent of this meeting is to share the information learned from applying the energy and materials intensity indicators.

Contact: **Elizabeth Atkinson**
(613) 943-0394

Education

Building on its work with professional engineers in British Columbia, the Education Committee is currently developing a training module for integrating sustainability into engineering practices in Quebec. In addition, the Committee continues to work with Canadian business schools to help integrate environmental issues into existing programs. In March, the NRTEE will host a workshop entitled "Greening Business Curricula: Integrating Sustainability into the Core," convening frontline business educators, students and professionals. On the publication front, a practical guide to helping communities promote environmentally responsible action, *Tools of Change: Proven Methods for Promoting Environmental Citizenship* is now available (see March's *Publications Catalogue*). Two upcoming publications are a revised model round table kit and an annotated bibliography of relevant materials for business schools.

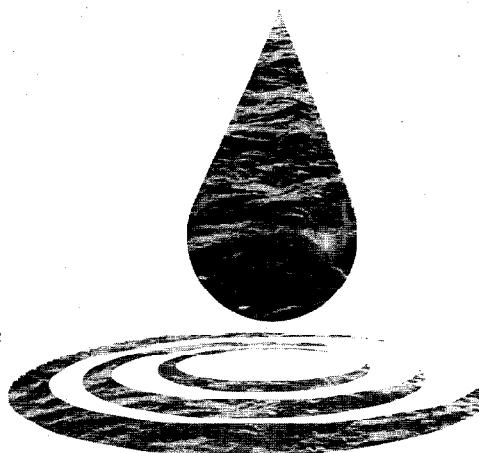
Contact: **Shelley Kaufman**
(613) 943-0398

Foreign Policy and Sustainable Development

The issue of sustainable cities continues to be a major focus of this program's work, and remains prominent in Canada's foreign policy strategies and on the APEC agenda. Canadian

suppliers face a growing foreign demand for products and services that accommodate a variety of approaches and needs for sustainable urban development. The Foreign Policy and Sustainability Committee held a workshop in January to determine prospects for, and approaches to, developing a coordinated strategy for Canadian suppliers. Preliminary recommendations from the expert participants will be reviewed by the NRTEE.

Contact: **David Morgan**
(204) 958-7740



Ocean Environment and Resources

This Spring, the NRTEE will release *Sustainable Strategies for Oceans: A Co-Management Guide* at an international workshop co-hosted by the Fraser Basin Council, Environment Canada and the NRTEE. The practical planning guide and the workshop, which will be attended by participants from organizations around the world, are designed to help further the use of an integrated approach to managing large ecosystems, both here in Canada and abroad (see *Publications Catalogue*).

Contact: **Nancy Averill**
(613) 943-0399

Federal Green Procurement

Based on the work of its Task Force on Federal Green Procurement, the NRTEE recently released a Statement on federal green procurement practices and opportunities.

The Statement is available as a supplement to *Going for Green: Meeting Foreign Demand for Environmentally Preferable Products and Services through Federal Procurement, a Backgrounder* released by the NRTEE last fall (see *Publications Catalogue*). The Statement contains recommendations on how and to what extent the government should use green procurement as a means to prepare Canadian firms for growing foreign markets for "green" products, services and means of production. It also addresses broader issues such as the federal leadership role.

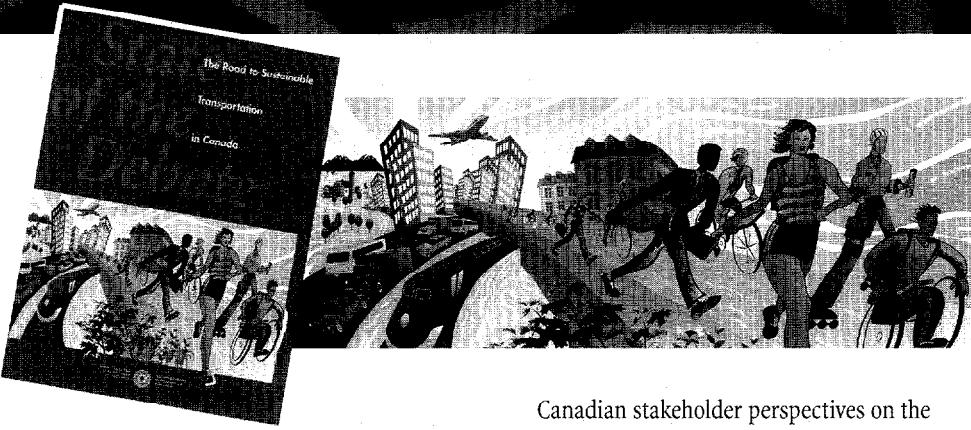
Contact: **David Morgan**
(204) 958-7740

Economic Instruments and Greening the Budget

The Economic Instruments Committee submitted its annual advice to the Minister of Finance in preparation for the 1998 federal budget. The focus of the Committee's recommendations was sustainability on private lands, particularly private woodlots in the Maritime provinces, and brownfield sites (contaminated sites that can be economically restored for productive use) across the country. The Committee recommended that amendments be made to the Income Tax Act to encourage sustainable management of private woodlots and that federal and provincial governments work with the private sector to stimulate brownfield development.

The Committee has also established a special Emissions Trading Task Force to design a domestic emissions trading program for greenhouse gases and possibly other pollutants. Using the round table process, the task force will draw together key stakeholders to obtain feedback to design features of a national emissions trading system. An extremely complex issue which calls for participation of many stakeholders, emissions trading will be one part of the broader regulatory approach needed to meet Canada's commitment under the Kyoto Protocol.

Contact: **Elizabeth Atkinson**
(613) 943-0394



Sustainable Transportation

The NRTEE released *The Road to Sustainable Transportation in Canada* at the National Forum on Passenger Transportation in Montreal in November 1997. The *State of the Debate* report outlines current knowledge and

Canadian stakeholder perspectives on the need for, and ways of achieving, sustainable transportation (see *Publications Catalogue*). The next phase of work will be to conduct national stakeholder consultations to examine ways of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in urban transportation.

Contact: **Gene Nyberg**
(613) 995-7581

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Desktop Publisher
Kindi Chana

Manager, Information Holdings
David Shields

Office Manager and Conference/Meeting
Coordinator
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Pierrette Guitard

Finance & Administration Officer
Julie Martinat

Administrative & Finance Clerk
Anne Mineault

Secretaries
Lise Bélanger
Carole Desjardins
Manon Quevillon

For more information, contact:
**The National Round Table
on the Environment and
the Economy**

Canada Building
344 Slater Street, Suite 200
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1R 7Y3
Tel: (613) 992-7189
Fax: (613) 992-7385
E-Mail: admin@nrtee-trnee.ca
Web: <http://www.nrtee-trnee.ca>

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