

For Immediate Release
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Atlantic Environment Ministers Discuss Climate Change and other Regional Issues

WOLFVILLE, NS – The Council of Atlantic Environment Ministers met to discuss regional cooperation on important issues at a meeting in Wolfville, June 5-6, 2008.

Mark Parent, Nova Scotia Minister of Environment, hosted George Webster, Prince Edward Island's Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry, and Charlene Johnson, Newfoundland and Labrador Minister of Environment and Conservation, for a wide-ranging discussion. Roland Haché, New Brunswick Minister of Environment was unable to attend the meetings, but the province was represented by Deputy Minister Rachel Bard.

In recognition of concern regarding the effects of climate change and the impact of sea-level rise in Atlantic Canada, the ministers agreed to collaborate on an Atlantic Climate Change Adaptation Strategy developed as a result of the Atlantic Adaptation Workshop, held in Saint John, NB on May 8-9.

The environment ministers discussed recent announcements by the federal government in relation to air pollutants and greenhouse gas emission reductions. They noted that because the Atlantic provinces have a greater percentage of their total emissions from large industry compared to all other provinces, the proposed regulatory framework could place an inordinate burden on the regional economy. It was noted that the production of renewable energy may be facilitated by the establishment of an enhanced Atlantic transmission grid. The ministers agreed that payments by jurisdictions into the proposed technology fund to offset GHG emissions be applied to projects in those jurisdictions.

Ministers received an update on efforts to further harmonize legislation relating to solid wastes including e-waste (discarded computers and electronic equipment), paint, and used oil and oil filters. They continue to support a joint approach to the management of various waste materials where cooperation results in a more cost-effective and efficient approach.

The ministers voiced their support for the establishment of an Atlantic Region Environmental Enforcement Committee that will enhance and, where possible, harmonize enforcement activities by sharing information, equipment, and resources recognizing that environmental issues often have transboundary implications.

Ministers also expressed their commitment on the adoption of the Municipal Wastewater Effluent Strategy and will work with the federal government on implementation mechanisms that will accommodate the unique nature of communities in some Atlantic provinces.

The next meeting of the Council of Atlantic Environment Ministers will be held in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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