



## **RIO + 13**

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### **THE THIRTEENTH ANNUAL RIO (REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS) REPORT CARD, 2005**

Grading the Government of Canada and the Provinces/Territories on their Environmental and Sustainable Development Commitments

### **LE 13<sup>e</sup> BULLETIN DE NOTES RIO (RAPPORT DE 2005 SUR LES OBLIGATIONS INTERNATIONALES)**

Notes données au gouvernement du Canada et aux provinces pour leurs engagements en matière d'environnement

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## BULLETIN DE NOTES POUR LE GOUVERNEMENT FÉDÉRAL

SUJET	NOTE
Obligations pour augmenter l'assistance à l'étranger, au sujet du développement, à 0.7% du PNB	C+
Obligations pour réduire les émissions de gaz à effet de serre	B-
Obligations fédérales à la biodiversité	D+
Obligations pour évaluer et réformer les politiques au sujet des pesticides et toxiques	F
Obligations pour l'évaluation environnementale	C+
Agenda 21 – Obligations pour assurer que le commerce et l'environnement soient mutuellement supporté	F
Obligations à la conservation et le soutien de l'utilisation des ressources marines	F
Forêts	C

**BULLETIN DE NOTES POUR LES GOUVERNEMENTS  
PROVINCIALES**

<b>PROVINCE / TERRITOIRE</b>	<b>SUJET</b>	<b>NOTE</b>
<b>Terre-Neuve et Labrador</b>	<b>Biodiversité Changements climatiques</b>	<b>B- B-</b>
<b>Nouvelle-Écosse</b>	<b>Biodiversité ChimieToxiques / Pollution Changements climatiques</b>	<b>C+ F F</b>
<b>Iles du Prince-Édouard</b>	<b>Biodiversité Changements climatiques</b>	<b>B A-</b>
<b>Nouveau Brunswick</b>	<b>Biodiversité ChimieToxiques / Pollution Changements climatiques</b>	<b>B F C-</b>
<b>Québec</b>	<b>Biodiversité Changements climatiques</b>	<b>B- B-</b>
<b>Ontario</b>	<b>Biodiversité Changements climatiques</b>	<b>B- C+</b>
<b>Manitoba</b>	<b>Biodiversité Changements climatiques</b>	<b>C B-</b>
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	<b>Biodiversité Changements climatiques</b>	<b>D+ C-</b>
<b>Alberta</b>	<b>Biodiversité Changements climatiques</b>	<b>F F</b>
<b>Colombie-Britannique</b>	<b>Biodiversité Changements climatiques</b>	<b>F F</b>
<b>Territoires Nord Ouest</b>	<b>Biodiversité Changements climatiques</b>	<b>C F</b>
<b>Yukon</b>	<b>Biodiversité Changements climatiques</b>	<b>D- F</b>
<b>Nunavut</b>	<b>Biodiversité Changements climatiques</b>	<b>D- B-</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

Sierra Club of Canada has been researching, writing and producing the RIO Report Card every year since 1993, marking the first anniversary of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, and every anniversary since. The report card, now in its thirteenth year, continues under the name RIO, as an acronym and not a city. R.I.O. stands for "Report on International Obligations." We continue to measure progress on environment and development commitments, whether reached in Rio, Kyoto, Johannesburg or Stockholm.

This is the first report card to grade an entire year of the federal government of Prime Minister Paul Martin. The year has been rocky, interrupted by a federal election that elected a Minority Government. Although hopes were high for environmental achievement in a Parliament with a majority of parties strongly favouring Kyoto, the reality was unpleasant. For a Minority Parliament to work, parties need to be able to set aside partisanship to achieve shared goals. Many in the environmental movement, including the Sierra Club of Canada RIO Report Card team, expected that Jack Layton and Gilles Duceppe would work with the Liberal government to achieve progress on Kyoto. Sadly, this was the most partisan, nasty and toxic session of Parliament in living memory. Statesmanship cannot exist when governed by daily polls to see who is up and who is "on the ropes."

In the brinksmanship created by an election threat, Jack Layton and the NDP acted in the interests of the country and the planet. The assistance in passing the Budget Implementation Bill and additional budget measures was applauded by the environmental community and Canadians in general.

Against this backdrop, less has been accomplished than we had hoped when the minority Parliament was elected. If we were grading for effort, Stéphane Dion would deserve an "A." But Sierra Club of Canada's RIO Report Card team are not easy graders.

The record is mixed. Progress has been made. Significant amounts of money have been committed, but overall, the record is merely average.

## REPORT ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

JUNE 2004 - JUNE 2005

### Commitment to Increase Overseas Development Assistance to 0.7% of GDP

#### 2005 Grade: C+

2004 Grade: C+  
2003 Grade: B-  
2002 Grade: C+  
2001 Grade: D  
2000 Grade: D+  
1999 Grade: D  
1998 Grade: D  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: F  
1995 Grade: F  
1994 Grade: B  
1993 Grade: F

In 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit, Canada committed to increasing overseas development assistance (ODA) to 0.7% of our GDP. This commitment represented a target set by Lester B. Pearson when he chaired a World Bank Commission. In 1992, Canadian ODA stood at 0.45% of GDP. In the “programme review,” deficit cutting era of the Chrétien Liberals, ODA dropped to 0.25% of GDP in 2000/2001.

The 2005 budget, plus the additional funds secured in the deal with Layton’s NDP, bring the amount for 2005 spending to 0.36%. The 2004/05 budget for international assistance was \$3,237 million, and grew by 12.4% in the 2005/06 budget to \$3,637 million. The additional budget measure negotiated between the NDP and Liberals generated an additional \$250 million.

Worse, and maddingly exasperating for the brilliant “Make Poverty History” campaign of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, Martin has decided he cannot reiterate Canada’s commitment to meet 0.7% of GDP to ODA. Now that 11 other countries around the world have adopted the UN target, proposed by a former Canadian Prime Minister, Canada is dropping it. No wonder Bono is chastising Martin.

We are a very wealthy country with a growing economy. Canada’s economic circumstances, among the developed countries put us in an ideal position to commit to the UN target. Canada can meet the 0.7% with increases of 15% to the International Assistance Envelope each year until 2015. We must remain committed to the Pearson target.

To meet the 0.7%, choices may have to be made. Ceasing the subsidy to the nuclear industry (over \$200 million/year), would be a good start.

## Commitment to Reduce Greenhouse Gases

### 2005 Grade: B-

2004 Grade: B for Chrétien's last six months  
incomplete for Martin's first six months  
2003 Grade: A (for ratification)  
incomplete (for implementation)  
2002 Grade: B  
2001 Grade: D  
2000 Grade: C  
1999 Grade: incomplete  
1998 Grade: incomplete  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: D-  
1995 Grade: D+  
1994 Grade: C+  
1993 Grade: A (for ratification) D (for implementation)

At the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, Canada was in the lead on climate change. Along with most of the world, including the US and the developing world, Canada signed and ratified the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC). All nations pledged to reduce greenhouse gases to levels that would avoid "dangerous" climate change impacts. Ever since then, greenhouse gases have increased.

In December 1997, the same nations gathered in Kyoto, Japan to negotiate a more stringent agreement with targets and timelines for the industrialized countries.

On February 16, 2005, the Kyoto Protocol entered into force as binding international law. Nearly seven years after negotiating the Protocol at the Third Conference of the Parties, the international negotiating process can move forward to the urgently required reduction targets following Kyoto. Avoiding "dangerous" levels of greenhouse gases (GHG) will require global reductions on the order of 60% below 1990 levels. Kyoto only commits Canada to 6%. We are at serious risk of uncontrollable levels of climate impacts.

The scientific community is increasingly warning that actions must be swifter and deeper than anything contemplated by governments thus far. The most recent science makes the case that we must avoid a 2 degree Celsius average global temperature increase. A taskforce of the U.K. Institute for Public Policy Research argued that a "point of no return" in catastrophic interference with the climate system will be reached if the global average temperature increases by 2 degrees Celsius. This will occur if carbon dioxide levels increased from the pre-Industrial Revolution level of 275 parts per million (ppm) to an unheard of concentration in the atmosphere of 400 ppm. Current concentrations have already reached 379 ppm. This is essentially irreversible. The International Energy Agency projects, on current actions, a *63 percent increase* in emissions by 2030. In order to avoid the

“point of no return,” *60-80 percent reductions* from developed countries and a global reduction of at least 30 percent are required by 2030.

The scale of the challenge and the severity of the threat are still poorly understood by Canadian governments – federal, provincial and territorial.

The Kyoto file has clearly dominated the first full year of Martin’s environmental performance. There has been a significant and impressive increase in the level of activity and the seriousness of purpose the federal government assigns to the issue. Points are awarded for improving the management of the issue by creating the Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on Kyoto implementation, chaired by Industry Minister David Emerson. This committee should remain active through the Kyoto period, or until 2012. The effort to achieve 25% reductions in GHG emissions from Canadian car makers, although part of the Kyoto implementation plan since 2000, did not begin in earnest until the fall of 2004. The development of Project Green represented a political commitment to Kyoto targets in the face of bureaucratic intransigence. It is significant as the first time the federal government has committed to the use of regulations to meet targets. The Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) has been identified as the appropriate law within which to promulgate regulations. Environmental groups support the use of CEPA, but the majority of groups prefer that the Act not be amended for this purpose. All environmental law experts agree that amendments are not legally necessary and were only put forward to deal with a perception problem. The government should move forward, as planned, to regulate under CEPA.

Lastly, the government deserves extra credit for offering to host the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP) in Montreal, November 28-December 9, 2005. These significant negotiations will be both the 11<sup>th</sup> COP under the FCCC (COP11) and the first Meeting of the Parties under Kyoto (MOP1). Following a strong effort on climate change at the G-8 Summit to be hosted by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair in early July in Gleneagles, Scotland, the international negotiations under the UN will move for the first time ever to North America for COP11/MOP1. The stakes are high, but many in the international community are grateful to Canada for hosting, in hopes that the proximity to the US will increase pressure on the Bush Administration.

Nevertheless, these positive steps are against a backdrop of cushioning the worst polluters from their fair share of reductions. Chrétien’s promise to hold economic impacts for the oil and gas sector to \$15/tonne for carbon reductions, with the remainder to be absorbed by the Canadian taxpayer, creates a large degree of financial risk and exposure for the government. It also constitutes a new type of potential future subsidy to the fossil fuel industry. The Chrétien government also set the reduction targets for big polluters through an “intensity-based” target. This is the Bush approach, allowing reductions in a ratio to unit of production. Under this system, emissions can increase in absolute terms while declining in intensity. The total amount of carbon that Canada must reduce annually to meet Kyoto targets is 270 million tonnes (or megatonnes). Since the heavy industrial sector contributes half of all emissions, it would be logical to expect these polluters to have a target of 135 megatonnes. Project Green calls for 39 megatonnes from what

are termed “large final emitters” (LFE = oil and gas sector, large utilities). The previous Chrétien plan has called for 55 megatonnes reductions, although, as noted, based on intensity. The only “plus” was the fact that the 55 megatonne target was voluntary and the Project Green approach for the biggest polluters calls for the target to be regulated by law.

**Letting big industry off the hook sabotages Canada’s Kyoto targets.** The Athabasca tar sands alone will, by 2010, account for 70 megatonnes of emissions. It is this aspect of the plan that has been universally condemned.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to deny that progress has been made in the 2005 budget and “Project Green.” Together they deliver the following in a revamped implementation plan:

- 5500 megawatts of renewable energy (equivalent to 20% of all new energy source brought on stream in Canada) by expanding the Wind Power Production Initiative (quadrupling it with \$200 million), and creating a Renewable Energy Production Incentive (to stimulate co-generation, solar energy, small scale hydro, geo-thermal, etc; \$97 million);
- expanded the accelerated Capital Cost Allowance (CCA) treatment for equipment purchases for all renewables, and making it very attractive for investors, improving the accelerated CCA from 30% to 50% and expanding the types of equipment that qualify;
- \$1 billion Climate Fund to buy (and then retire) carbon credits in a competitive market;
- \$250 million for a Partnership Fund to engage provinces and territories in carbon reduction with federal support. It is from this fund that Ontario will find funds to shut down its coal plants and build an East-West grid to buy Manitoba Hydro power;
- an agreement with carmakers for 5.3 megatonnes in GHG emission reductions (which, although voluntary, could work if the monitoring is robust, environmental NGOs and organized labour are given a seat in the monitoring group, and regulations wait in the wings for the first sign of industry failure);
- significant enhancement (\$225 million more) for the home EnerGuide programme to retrofit 500,000 homes by 2010;
- the Green Municipal Funds administered through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is expanded by \$300 million (although not all these funds will be applied to Kyoto. The clean-up of “brownfield sites” is highlighted as a new category of FCM loans from this fund.)

As well, there are significant funds for green municipal infrastructure through the re-directed gas tax money labeled the “New Deal for Cities and Communities,” although projects from these funds are not included in Project Green’s assigned carbon reduction targets. It comes to \$7 billion over the next ten years, with \$600 million in 2005-2006, building to a steady \$2 billion/year by 2009-2010. Although some of these funds could be used for highways for rural communities, the

language for large urban centres is heavily focused on “environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure.”

Reaching the 270 megatonne reduction target is likely not possible without following up on suggestions for further action in both the plan and federal 2005 budget. Sierra Club of Canada believes it is critical to push for the additional steps toward ecological fiscal reform suggested in the 2005 budget. We will need fees to encourage the purchase of energy efficient cars and appliances. We will need to retune the plan going forward, and to force the biggest polluters to do their share.

Internationally, Canada needs to be prepared to show real leadership at COP11. Canada needs to join with Europe in advancing meaningful targets to avoid catastrophic climatic disruption at COP11. A tax on international aviation fuel, as proposed by the UK, needs Canadian support. Canada should avoid the temptation to bring the Bush Administration back into the process at the cost of emasculating the entire effort.

### **Federal Commitment to Biodiversity**

#### **2005 Grade: D+**

2004 Grade: D  
2003 Grade: B+  
2002 Grade: D+  
2001 Grade: D  
2000 Grade: F  
1999 Grade: D-  
1998 Grade: F  
1997 Grade: D-  
1996 Grade: D  
1995 Grade: C  
1994 Grade: D  
1993 Grade: A (for ratification)  
C (for implementation)

Since 1993, and our first RIO Report Card, the federal government has been graded toward progress in upholding the UN Convention for the Protection of Biodiversity. Two indicators in protecting biodiversity have been used: progress in completing the national park system, and work to protect species at risk in Canada.

The mark this year would be a D, if not for the two positive steps this year. First, the passage of Bill C-15, an Act to Amend the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994 and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, is very good news indeed. The new law will increase fines to shippers that illegally dump oily bilge at sea. It is estimated that 300,000 seabirds are killed every year from illegally dumped oil, off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador alone. Environment Minister Stéphane Dion worked diligently to ensure passage of this bill, initially

introduced by his predecessor, David Anderson. Credit and thanks to a rare exercise of non-partisanship where all parties supported the bill through the House with no amendments. It all nearly fell apart in the Senate when Conservative Senators insisted the bill required amendments. Conservative MP and Environment Critic for his party, Bob Mills, put the seabirds ahead of politics and went to the Senate committee to support Minister Dion. Well done.

Second, credit is given for the strong support to prevent the North Dakota government from completing and operating the Devils Lake “emergency” outlet project. Prime Minister Martin has spoken directly with President Bush, urging he support a reference to the International Joint Commission. The transfer of water from the closed-basin Devil’s Lake into the Sheyenne and Red Rivers could lead to ecological disaster. Ambassador Frank M’Kenna has also made this a priority. The project would cause an irreversible release of foreign biota and invasive species into the Sheyenne River and thus into the Red River of Manitoba. North Dakota has ignored the concerns raised by not only the Federal government but also neighbouring US states that proceeding with this interbasin diversion without an environmental assessment risks untold economic and ecological consequences. Unilaterally proceeding with this project would also set a very bad precedent, contrary to the obligations under the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty to not pollute and to not cause damage to Canadian waters.

The federal government continues to urge the US feds to refer the proposed project to the International Joint Commission (IJC) for an independent scientific review. It has also recently announced a \$1.1 million annual fund to improve the monitoring of Lake Winnipeg’s and the Red River’s water quality, setting a base line to assess the damage should the Devils Lake project proceed.

The grade for the federal government would have been higher, had it made a unilateral reference to the IJC under Article IX of the 1909 Treaty. While this option for an IJC examination and report has never been used for fear of upsetting the practice of joint referrals from both Canada and the US, the reckless action of the North Dakota government and indifference shown so far by the US federal government, speak to the exceptional circumstance of this case.

### **Species at Risk**

Since the Species at Risk Act (SARA) came into force in June 2003, the government has significantly undermined the Act’s integrity. This brief addresses two serious listing concerns and the failure of the federal government to implement its much-lauded ‘safety net’.

The Species at Risk Act provides for a period of nine months between when a wildlife species is listed by COSEWIC and when the Governor in Council must decide whether to list the species under the Act. However in April 2004, the federal government announced that it was delaying the listing of twelve aquatic species by an *additional nine months*, citing the need for ‘extended consultation.’ In May 2005, the government did it again holding back seven aquatic species designated for listing by COSEWIC for an extended period of consultation.

While the extended consultation for these twelve species was cause for serious concern, even more alarming is that the federal government is formalizing this extended consultation process as part of its ongoing listing process. The effect of this decision is that endangered wildlife will now potentially wait close to two years before receiving the legal protection afforded by SARA. This is completely contrary to the spirit of SARA, as well as to the letter of the law. Environment Canada defends the extended listing process by asserting the importance of consultation in the spirit of the Act's cooperative nature. Species that are at risk of extinction cannot wait for cumbersome listing processes; their only hope for survival is the expedient implementation of action and early development of recovery plans once a species is listed. SARA was designed to incorporate extensive consultations during recovery planning, where socio-economic impacts are to be carefully taken into consideration.

On October 22, 2004, Environment Minister Stéphane Dion recommended to the Federal Cabinet that the Cultus and Sakinaw sockeye stocks not be listed as endangered under SARA, despite evidence from the scientific authority the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) that the populations are in imminent danger of extinction. On January 12, 2005, the decision not to list these two salmon populations was upheld by Cabinet. Minister Dion's recommendations were based on deeply flawed socio-economic analyses of the potential economic impacts of listing the two salmon populations—analyses that have been heavily discredited and dismissed by key departmental officials within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)<sup>1</sup>.

Minister Dion stated that “the Fraser River sockeye fishery would have to be virtually shut down if these two populations were listed under SARA,” and that the consequence to the BC fishing industry would be \$125 million in lost revenue over the next four years. A more thorough look at mitigation measures reveals that, in fact, even if a ‘zero tolerance’ policy were implemented as a result of legally listing the Cultus and Sakinaw salmon, such a policy would likely only mean temporary disruptions in fisheries of certain Fraser River sockeye stocks in certain approach areas, at limited times during the fishing season. This would hardly be a shut down of the sockeye salmon fishery.

A decision to list the Sakinaw Lake and Cultus Lake sockeye salmon populations would demand changes to the mixed-stock fishery, which DFO is reluctant to make. Yet the mixed-stock fishery threatens the demise of not just the Sakinaw Lake and Cultus Lake sockeye, but hundreds of other salmon populations; these two populations just happen to be among the best-researched.

Had DFO the leadership and will needed to move to innovative harvest approaches such as selective fisheries, more responsive and adaptive time-and-area closures, the movement of fishing effort away from mixed-stock areas, and the development of more ‘terminal area’ fisheries in cooperation with First Nations communities further along the migratory path of homeward-swimming Fraser sockeye, the economic impact of these disruptions would be negligible.

The Minister of the Environment has now adopted DFO's approach by recommending that the Plains Bison not be listed because of the alleged inability to genetically distinguish wild and domestic 'plains bison and the potential economic implications for the Canadian Bison industry.

Section 80 of SARA enables the Environment Minister to recommend an emergency order to protect a species and its habitat if he is of the opinion that a species faces imminent threats to its survival. A petition seeking the emergency order for the northern spotted owl was submitted to the Minister of Environment in February 2004. The northern spotted owl is the most endangered bird in Canada. The BC government continues to allow logging in owl habitat while the recovery plan is being finalized.

In a letter of response to the petitioners, former Environment Minister David Anderson, recognized that the owl faces imminent extirpation, but failed to intervene, stating that: "If this collaborative approach [with the government of British Columbia] does not soon result in the province taking actions to protect the Northern Spotted Owl, I will be prepared to consider making a recommendation under Section 80 of SARA." Almost a year has passed, and logging continues in northern spotted owl habitat. The federal government clearly lacks the political will to protect endangered wildlife when provincial governments are failing to do so—an ominous sign for species in provinces across Canada that are receiving inadequate protection, species that the government claimed the safety net would protect.

Since enactment of the Species at Risk Act, the federal government has made a series of decisions that are inconsistent with Parliament's intentions in enacting this statute. The unilateral and probably unlawful extension of the consultation period for listing some species, the decision not to list the highly endangered sockeye salmon populations of Sakinaw Lake and Cultus Lake, and the failure to issue an emergency order to protect the highly endangered northern spotted owl all point to a lack of political will to implement SARA.

### **Protected Areas**

In January of this year, another national park was created—Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve in northern Labrador. Measures to address the ecological integrity of Banff National Park were also announced. These projects, with a total cost of \$8 million, address traffic congestion and wildlife movement, restore grizzly bear habitat while improving the trail system, and engage and involve visitors in stewardship initiatives.

Unfortunately, Nahanni National Park Reserve, a World Heritage Site in Canada's Northwest Territories, is threatened by the proposed Prairie Creek Mine – a risky mine proposal located upstream from the South Nahanni River. The federal government has promised to expand the national park but the NWT Supreme Court recently decided to exempt the re-construction of a winter road located upstream from Nahanni National Park Reserve from an environmental assessment. Meanwhile, conservation groups have called upon Minister for Northern Affairs

Andy Scott, to stop issuing permits for mineral exploration within the South Nahanni watershed. While Stéphane Dion attempts to protect the area, Andy Scott is essentially sabotaging the effort. Also noted in the Alberta section, the Cheviot open pit coal mine now threatens ecological integrity of Jasper National Park.

The federal decision to provide funding for the NWT Protected Areas Strategy was very good news this past year. Establishment of a network protected areas in the Mackenzie Valley is essential if biodiversity of this wilderness is to be protected in the face of the proposed \$7 billion Mackenzie Gas Project and other oil and gas development that the Mackenzie Gas Project will induce. On the other hand, the extraordinary subsidies and political support lavished by the federal minister on the multinational corporations proposing the Mackenzie Gas Project is unholy given the harm to biodiversity and Canada's Kyoto commitments, and limited economic benefits (e.g., 50 permanent jobs for northerners) associated with the Project.

## **Commitment to Review and Reform Pesticide and Toxic Policies**

### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: D  
2003 Grade: C+  
2002 Grade: C  
2001 Grade: F  
2000 Grade: D-  
1999 Grade: D  
1998 Grade: F  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: C-  
1995 Grade: D  
1994 Grade: C  
1993 Grade: F

### **Pesticides**

In 2002, we congratulated the government on the passage of the revised Pest Control Products Act. The Act would, for the first time in 30 years, amend the way pesticides were regulated in Canada. Now, 2 \_ years later, the act is *still* not in force. Promises to improve public participation and transparency in reevaluation decisions have not resulted in better decision making, as no regulations govern the processes, which lurch along in an ad-hoc fashion and with no standing rules or procedures.

Promises to fast track a review process for the most commonly used pesticides for lawns and gardens have been undertaken before the new regulations have come into force, so they are primarily governed by the old legislation, and give little

comfort to health and environmental critics. Recently, changes in staffing at senior levels appear to have resulted in a management vacuum evidenced by miscommunications and extremely poor judgment in decision making.

The handling of the 20 year review of the phenoxy herbicide 2,4-D is very troubling. The evidence from multiple human exposure studies is that 2,4-D increases cancer risks, and it is an endocrine disrupter. Although Canada's Pest Control Products Act explicitly forbids the use of the word "safe" in advertising for pesticide products, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) - before the public comment period on its review of the phenoxy herbicide 2,4-D had even begun - declared that "2,4-D can be used safely on lawns and turf" in the information note posted on its website and in numerous media interviews. The PMRA continues to fail the public interest in its pro-chemical bias.

The PMRA also attacked a local environmental group in Perth for advocating non-toxic alternatives, which although promoted by well-known horticulturalist and Radio Noon guest Ed Lawrence as well as recommended on an Environment Canada website, had not been registered for that use by PMRA. A day after the PMRA's letter was placed in the mail, Landscape Ontario had distributed a letter to lawn care companies in the region as well as a staff member of the town. The contents of this letter were intended to discredit ecoPerth. What is troubling is that this action demonstrates that the PMRA attempted to discredit ecoPerth and assist a chemical lawncare advocate.

And then there is lindane, a toxic, carcinogenic, persistent chemical. Although PMRA prohibited the use of lindane as a seed coating for canola in 2001, the manufacturer, Crompton Inc. called for a review of the decision, to which it is entitled by law. However, because the new Act has not come into force, as noted earlier, the procedure for setting up the review panel was ad-hoc.

Sierra Club of Canada (SCC) was the sole public interest intervener. No other environmental, indigenous peoples, or health organization or group was asked to participate. The Minister of Environment's office was unaware of the proceeding, despite lindane's candidacy for the Stockholm Convention Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) list or the current North American Regional Action Plan (NARAP) being developed by Canada, the US, and Mexico under the Commission for Environmental Cooperation. Further, none of the experts working on lindane were even aware of the review panel, let alone asked to provide input or advice.

Of the three members selected by PMRA to "impartially" review their decision to refuse the re-registration of lindane, one has a long and established reputation for often, but not always, supporting the chemical industry. The worrying record includes having defended the safety of DDT, 2,4,5-T and supported the use of bovine growth hormone, among other things. Another member runs an American consulting company that is dedicated to supporting pesticide companies in court. The third is a former US pesticide regulator. None is an expert on lindane or occupational exposure. The scope of the hearing was so narrow, that the expert panel rejected a large proportion of SCC's evidence on health and environment as irrelevant. SCC withdrew from the hearing. The entire process was so poorly

designed and executed that if it was not deliberately set up to overturn the PMRA's decision and protect industry interests, it illustrates wholesale incompetence and a complete departure from PMRA's mandate to protect health.

### **CEPA (Canadian Environmental Protection Act)**

Late 2004 marked the beginning of the review of the 1999 Canadian Environmental Protection Act as legislated to begin after its fifth year in force. Environment Canada released a scoping document in December 2004 and the public had 60 days to comment. During this time, stakeholder consultations were held in various cities across Canada. The result of these meetings has been a document outlining major messages that Environment Canada heard over the course of the consultation. It is essential that the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, charged with leading the review, ensure that the concerns for greater public participation, increased capacity, improved implementation of the precautionary principle are addressed.

### **POPs (Persistent Organic Pollutants)**

Finally, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) came into force on May 17, 2004. Canada has until May 17, 2006 to develop a National Implementation Plan (NIP) outlining how it plans to eliminate POPs. Environment Canada released its draft NIP in February 2005. As a draft, it's a good start, but the final version must contain information on timelines and targets, an evaluation of Canada's toxic programs as they relate to POPs, clear language that the NIP is Canada's guide for eliminating POPs and promoting safe alternatives and non-incinerating technologies, among other items.

### **Conclusion**

Minister of Health Ujjal Dosanjh has not yet made any impact on this area of his mandate. He must exercise the same instincts that led him to reject departmental advice against mandatory reporting of adverse drug reactions and clean up the pesticide performance of this government! He must start by rejecting the advice to continue the current registration of 2,4-D and by eliminating licensed uses where children play.

### **Commitment to Environmental Assessment**

#### **2005 Grade: C+**

2004 Grade: C+

2003 Grade: C

2002 Grade: D-

2001 Grade: C-

2000 Grade: F

1999 Grade: F

1998 Grade: F

1997 Grade: F

1996 Grade: D  
1995 Grade: B-  
1994 Grade: C  
1993 Grade: F

An encouraging trend in the last 18 months has been a marked increase in the use of full panel reviews under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Panels have been announced for the Digby Neck Quarry proposal in Nova Scotia, the Belledune incinerator in New Brunswick (under appeal at the moment), the Mackenzie Gas Project and most recently the \$400 million proposal for clean up of the Sydney Tar Ponds. Over 4,000 local Sydney residents signed petitions opposing the plan to incinerate PCB waste. Concerns were raised about the so-called solidification and stabilization of the vast majority of the toxic sludge, which is slated to be left in place and covered (or mixed with) cement. Although a panel appears the obvious choice under the law, the province of Nova Scotia and its Crown corporation, Sydney Tar Ponds Agency, exerted tremendous pressure against a transparent and independent review. Ministers Stéphane Dion and Scott Brison, whose department of Public Works is in charge of the clean-up for the federal government, showed tremendous resolve in establishing a panel review for the clean up of the Sydney Tar Ponds in May 2005.

The federal environment assessment grade lost points for other developments. Environmental assessment of offshore developments emerged as a big issue in 2004. The deletion of offshore petroleum exploratory drilling from the Comprehensive Study List regulations was a move in the wrong direction. Regional strategic environmental assessments and assessment of marine seismic operations relating to oil and gas were also important indicators of a failure on the part of the federal government to do EA properly.

Laughably inadequate funding for environmental groups to participate in the joint panel review of the \$7 billion Mackenzie Gas Project (MGP) is proving to be a serious problem. The Mackenzie Gas Project is the largest industrial project in the history of the North, and will trigger oil and gas industrialization up and down the Mackenzie Valley, as well as fueling a major ramping up of tar sands development in northern Alberta. The federal government is spending hundreds of millions of dollars preparing itself for the MGP developments, hundreds of millions of dollars more on the Government of the Northwest Territories and aboriginal organizations promoting the pipelines and gas fields, but can only spare \$5,000 for Sierra Club of Canada, which is leading much of the NGO effort on the environmental assessment. Even former premier and pipeline supporter, Steve Kakfwi, has labeled the process “sad and absurd.”

A growing issue in 2004 and 2005 is the policy of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to scope the environmental assessments of projects as narrowly as possible. A multibillion dollar oil sands mine that causes massive air and water pollution and huge greenhouse gas emissions, destroys thousands of hectares of boreal forests, and generates massive tailings gets scoped as a stream crossing for the DFO assessment.

The release of the report of the External Advisory Committee on Smart Regulation in 2004 raised many red flags, given the poorly informed views of the Committee on environmental assessment. The government followed up on the Smart Regulation report in the October 2004 Speech from the Throne committed itself to consolidating federal EA, and providing a “unified and more effective EA process for Canada.” The government is proposing a hurried process for revising the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) with consultations in the spring, recommendations to Memorandum of Cabinet in the autumn, followed by legislative amendments. This agenda appears unlikely given political developments related to the Gomery inquiry, but it is nonetheless disconcerting given that CEAA was recently amended. Some positive changes could include giving the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency more authority to ensure the quality of assessments and to set out standards for approaches to scoping projects. On the negative side, the number of environmental assessments required by law could be drastically reduced.

Other provincial governments have also been reluctant to cooperate in joint panel reviews. For example, environmentalists have attempted to get joint panel reviews for major hydroelectric projects (including Wuskwatim in northern Manitoba), for years without success due to the fact that the province adamantly refuses to cooperate.

## **Agenda 21 Commitment to Make Trade and Environment Mutually Supportive**

### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: F  
2003 Grade: F  
2002 Grade: F  
2001 Grade: D-  
2000 Grade: D  
1999 Grade: F  
1998 Grade: F  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: F  
1995 Grade: F  
1994 Grade: F  
1993 Grade: F

How are trade rules and environmental laws supposed to relate to each other? The lingo is "mutual supportiveness." The language of "mutual supportiveness" is contained in a number of trade and environmental treaties, including Agenda 21.

The Canadian government continues to rely on unproven claims that prosperity and environmental protection are positively linked. If trade as mutually supportive to the environment were a class, a teacher's comments might say: "Canada continues to have a high rate of absenteeism, and is highly disruptive when it does attend."

This year, the Canadian government set its agenda of neo-liberal economic globalization on a rolling boil. This agenda is proceeding unfettered by environmental concern, or even contemplation.

Despite the din of democracy, the government is proceeding virtually by stealth with an aggressive trade liberalizing agenda. For example, how many Canadians would know that their government is pursuing a free trade agreement with South Korea? Canada is also in discussions with four Central American countries (CA4), Europe (through the European Free Trade Association), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and a hemispheric agreement that expands NAFTA called Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Unless one combs through government documents, such as the recently released "International Policy Statement," or attends speeches given to business groups by the Minister of International Trade on the future of Canada's trade policy, it is not likely anyone would know. Canada is also increasing trade promotion with emerging markets such as Japan, China, India and Brazil.

This aggressive approach follows from the US lead. When multilateral trade negotiations fall apart, plan B is to seek the same objectives in smaller or bilateral deals. Increasingly the big deals are falling apart, like the WTO's Doha Development Agenda and the Free Trade Area of the Americas. Developing countries and emerging market countries with their insistent demands about fairness band together and make a stand against the high-income countries, especially on the contentious issues of agricultural subsidies and market access. The WTO negotiations, called "close to a crisis" by the WTO Director-General, will next come to a head in Hong Kong in December 2005. When trade rules change and factories close, such as happened this year for fabric made in Lesotho, the people suffer. Yet trade deals seem impervious to larger commitments to poverty alleviation.

The government is bound by the *1999 Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* to conduct environmental assessments of trade agreements. The process is supposed to inform Canadian negotiators and dialogue with Canadians about environmental impacts. The department has published Initial Environmental Assessments (IEAs) for only some of the agreements they are pursuing: WTO, FTAA, Canada-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, and CA4. In every case, the environmental assessments unbelievably conclude minimal consequences for the environment. North America has the highest ecological footprint in the world and the Canadian government continues to insist this has nothing to do with trade.

The government is also pursuing greater integration with the US under the guise of "security and prosperity" (sometimes referred to as "NAFTA Plus"). The

environmental consequences of "deeper integration" will make NAFTA (a bad deal on the environment) look like the environmental high water mark. The basic concern with the idea of a "grand bargain" with the US was put nicely by former Liberal International Trade Minister Roy MacLaren:

A customs union, common market, or, more vaguely, a "single economic and security space" would, at the end of the day, mean submission by Canada and Mexico to US rules, practices, values and direction.

Our concern is that the US has the second largest ecological footprint in the world. In this context, Canadian sovereignty means being free to decouple ourselves from unsustainable economic policies and practices and an ineffective regulatory system.

In the next year, we will be watching closely as Canada begins to implement its commitment to the Kyoto Protocol. The government must be careful not to make good on the promises of international trade lawyers to sue the government under NAFTA for supposed preference of Canadian jobs and businesses. The government will need to try to stimulate new markets in alternatives, proliferate green technologies and establish an emissions trading regime all under the watchful gaze of foreign investors who may launch Chapter 11 actions in order to protect profits from dirty practices.

We renew our perennial call for a comprehensive review of NAFTA's environmental consequences - we beseech the government to stop gambling with the future of our environment by blindly pursuing greater trade liberalizing efforts. Serious efforts must be made to incorporate environmental assessment into the trade negotiation process allowing environmental concerns to shape negotiations and function as more than a public relations or credibility building exercise. The government's aggressive neo-liberal globalization agenda is proceeding without effective public engagement, in other words, without a mandate from the public. The consultation efforts to date do not allow the public (those who can penetrate the government web sites) to make an informed decision when it comes to environmental consequences. How many more boil water advisories, smog warnings and blackouts do Canadians need to endure before this government takes seriously the links between environmental and economic policy?

### **Commitment to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Living Marine Resources**

#### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: D  
2003 Grade: C  
2002 Grade: D-  
2001 Grade: F  
2000 Grade: D  
1999 Grade: C

1998 Grade: C-  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: F  
1995 Grade: C  
1994 Grade: F  
1993 Grade: B-

In this, the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual RIO Report Card, it is time to demand extraordinary intervention to the crisis in Canada's fisheries policy. Having maintained passing, if not strong marks in the last three years, the record is back to an F. Remarkably few people close to oceans issues maintain that DFO is a functional department fulfilling its mission. The level of dysfunction increasingly appears to be cultural. The requisite corrective action will be radical.

The crisis is best understood through the threats to wild salmon on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. The failure of DFO salmon policy was also highlighted in the 2004 report of the Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainable Development within the Office of the Auditor General, Johanne Gelinias.

In British Columbia, the Fraser Sockeye Review was released in 2002 with specific recommendations supported by all stakeholders. Key among these was the creation of a Wild Salmon Policy for the BC stocks by the end of 2003 and a risk strategy for management that included consultation with all stakeholders. On April 8, 2003, former Minister Thibault committed to the full acceptance and immediate implementation of all of the report's recommendations.

In December 2004, a framework for a Wild Salmon Policy was finally released by Fisheries Minister, Geoff Regan. It was condemned by all the environmental and conservation organizations in the BC Marine Conservation Caucus and by nearly every BC First Nation. Concerns have also been raised by the BC Streamkeepers Constituency.

A revised version was released on April 22, 2005 and still there is no clear commitment to the conservation of the abundance and diversity of wild salmon and their habitat. In fact, at every opportunity, the document subverts and compromises that necessary objective, and provides a wide range of opportunities for decision-makers to place any number of other "priorities" before that objective.

The first and perhaps most significant failing of the "Wild Salmon Policy" document is that it is not a real "policy" at all, at least not a clear *directive* policy of the kind that conservationists have demanded and were expecting. The policy permits bureaucrats the latitude to sacrifice entire genetic stocks of salmon for the benefit of fisheries or competing habitat demands. Also, there is nothing in the policy defining an objective scientifically-defensible threshold which when crossed would justify prosecutions under the habitat-protection provisions of the Fisheries Act. The radical nature of the proposed changes is far from the commitment to a conservation-first policy that wild pacific salmon need to guarantee their survival and to ensure a sustainable fishery.

Moreover, DFO has acted to block listing of populations, pursuant to the Species at Risk Act (SARA), of salmon that are at serious and imminent risk of extinction. As noted in the Biodiversity grade for Canada as a whole, the highly endangered Cultus and Sakinaw Lake Coho salmon were not listed despite recommendation by COSEWIC, the government's legislated committee of experts, that listing occurs on an emergency basis. The minister's justification was premised on a flawed socio-economic analysis, thus setting a disturbing precedent.

Disbanding of the Cultus and Sakinaw Recovery Teams and failure to activate Action Teams to oversee recovery is a prescription for extinction. Proposals to over-fish these, among other endangered stocks, is in the proposed 2005 fishing plans.

In addition, it appears the Upper Fraser Coho, White Sturgeon and Boccacio will meet the same fate. Documents prepared to assess listing under SARA [*"Socio-Economic Impacts of SARA – Interior Fraser Coho, White Sturgeon, Bocaccio"* (Gislason, 2004)] suggest a flawed analysis of financial impacts on commercial fisheries is the driver, rather than the conservation of endangered stocks.

Meanwhile on the East Coast, the Atlantic Salmon is in grave peril. The commercial wild fishery ended years ago, but measures to protect populations are still blunted by a political preference for the salmon aquaculture industry. The Inner Bay of Fundy Salmon are racing toward extinction. They were designated under SARA in 2004 as endangered. Historically, these salmon thrived in 33 rivers flowing to the Bay of Fundy in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Only two rivers now have any populations and they are at very low levels. The federal government has created a live gene bank to save something of these populations in storage. The Inner Bay of Fundy salmon are treated distinctly because they do not migrate to Greenland in the winter, but remain in the outer Bay of Fundy/Gulf of Maine for their life at sea. The population has been in decline since 1990, having gone from a peak of 40,000 mature fish in 1970s to less than 200 adults in 2003.

The Recovery Team working under SARA has identified salmon aquaculture as a significant risk factor for their recovery on many counts. There are legal obligations here to act, but the political clout of the salmon pens is implicitly overruling the Recovery Team.

As well, the Atlantic salmon from the outer Bay of Fundy rivers, including those in the State of Maine are in decline. The US Endangered Species Act has listed the salmon runs from six downeast Maine rivers near the centre of the salmon aquaculture industry. The outer Bay of Salmon stocks may be doomed as well, unless decisive action is taken to reduce the pollution from salmon aquaculture. Atlantic Salmon could become extinct in all the Bay of Fundy rivers.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the federal government is reluctant to do anything to disrupt the salmon aquaculture industry, even if it means the likely extinction of the Inner Bay of Fundy Salmon and the possible extinction of the final remnants of the outer Bay of Fundy stocks.

Despite several years of warnings from conservationists and its own biologists, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans continues to allow uncontrolled fishing on dozens of Pacific fish species. Dozens of stocks and species on Canada's west coast remain completely unprotected by total-allowable-catch limits (TACs). These fisheries fail to comply with the basis standards set by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Among the species subject to these fisheries are 13 species of long-lived rockfish, which are acutely vulnerable to overfishing.

Meanwhile, DFO continues to allow directed commercial and recreational fisheries upon inshore rockfish species (quillback, copper, China, tiger, yelloweye, and black) which are known to be gravely depleted, especially in the Strait of Georgia. These fisheries continue despite repeated ministerial assurances that "conservation" is the primary departmental management objective, and despite the absence of rockfish harvest refugia that DFO's own scientists have identified as a minimum necessary component of a rockfish conservation and restoration strategy.

Worsening matters, DFO has quietly changed the triggers for habitat protection. Under the Act, harmful alteration and destruction of fish habitat (a HADD) is to be prevented. The original trigger for whether salmon cages were destroying fish habitat was if the sediment had become "hypoxic." Whenever the benthos is starved for oxygen and beginning to give off hydrogen sulphide and methane gas, the sediment is termed "hypoxic." With hypoxic sediment as the trigger, that level of impact was considered illegal HADD under the Fisheries Act.

However, when New Brunswick instituted its environmental regulations on the industry, thanks to excellent work by the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, and assembled the resulting monitoring data, it was discovered that 30 percent of the sites were *already* hypoxic.

Rather than crack down on the aquaculture industry, DFO quietly abandoned the hypoxic trigger and went to "anoxic." Anoxic sediments are devoid of oxygen and hence of most life forms (a species of sea worm can survive in anoxic sediments but virtually nothing else.). In other words, the benthos must be a dead zone before the HADD trigger applies. Wild salmon habitat is now routinely destroyed by the salmon farming industry, but the legal triggers under the Fisheries Act are not applied, through a policy sleight of hand. Under a plain reading of the Act, hypoxic sediments represent a clear violation of federal law.

The wild Atlantic salmon and the benthos of Fundy bays and estuaries are being sacrificed for the industry.

On both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, the wild salmon is an essential element of land and culture, particularly for First Nations people, whether the Nuu-chal-Nulth and Haida in BC or the Maliseet of New Brunswick. Salmon are a key part of what makes up the tradition and culture of the Miramichi River in NB, the Margaree River in Nova Scotia and the mighty Fraser in BC. We are casually allowing these iconic populations to move to extinction.

Another industry is receiving preferential treatment from DFO at the expense of marine life. DFO has been ignoring advice of its regional scientists in order to allow greater predictability in the expansion of offshore oil and gas activity. DFO published a draft standard for the mitigation of environmental damage due to seismic testing in February. The draft guidelines were universally panned by scientists studying whales and seismic, many fisheries biologists and every major environmental group as well as many smaller regional and local groups. The proposed guidelines ignore huge levels of scientific uncertainty and act as though these gaps in knowledge can be safely camouflaged in an arrogant confidence. If these guidelines were to be approved, marine life in sensitive zones would be sure to be damaged by seismic testing in Atlantic Canada. In where the moratorium remains in place due to a large majority of public opinion, the draft guidelines may serve as propaganda in an effort to convince the public that oil and gas exploration can be protective of marine life.

More disturbing is the timing. Resources are being placed in smoothing the way for oil and gas prior to the mapping of sensitive zones and prior to the implementation of the Oceans Act's provisions for the development of public engagement in Coastal zone management.

Lastly, DFO is reducing resources in key areas through the Modernizing Compliance Initiative announced after the 2005 federal budget. According to a memo leaked to Alberta environmentalist Dr. Martha Kostuch, "It came as the result of an expenditure review exercise that was carried out in complete secrecy from staff, unions and the Canadian public. In fact, the department is still trying to quietly undertake this initiative, reducing both the level of service to Canadians and the level of protection of the aquatic environment. This is clear when one compares the information provided to staff on the internal Intranet site to the information provided to the public on DFO's Internet site."

Under the Modernizing Compliance Initiative, DFO is planning to cut 80 Fishery Officer positions and 42 Habitat Management positions. DFO plans to help offset the reductions of staff by the creation of 40 new habitat stewardship and monitoring officers' positions. The Fisheries Act has no provision for such positions and provides no authority for them to conduct inspections, to respond to complaints or to enforce the Fisheries Act.

Funding for fish habitat protection will be cut by \$2.3 million in 2005, with further cuts to a total of \$7 million a year by 2007.

The only bright spot we could find this year was the welcome decision, in response to public pressure, to maintain the DFO station on Sable Island, Nova Scotia, where the presence of the research facility is seen as a form of protection for the island's famous ponies.

It is hard to know where to start in reforming DFO. The problems within the department are well known on all three of Canada's coasts. Serious corrective action is long overdue. Or the government could simply rename the department: the Department of Fish Farms and Oil (DFO).

## **Forests**

### **2005 Grade: C**

2004 Grade: C  
2003 Grade: C+  
2002 Grade: F  
2001 Grade: Absent  
2000 Grade: D  
1999 Grade: D  
1998 Grade: D  
1997 Grade: D  
1996 Grade: C-  
1995 Grade: C+  
1994 Grade: A

The 2003-2008 National Forest Strategy (NFS) is being implemented with most provincial governments actively participating. Only Quebec and Alberta have not signed the accord, although Quebec is actively participating. Alberta's deputy has informed SCC that the province does plan to cooperate in the meeting of the Strategy's goals. It is a significant national undertaking that could create meaningful changes in forest landscape management.

With forest management as a provincial responsibility, the federal role is reduced to reports, studies, and coordination of efforts such as the NFS. Research has been curtailed in recent years through large budget cuts that reduced the federal forest effort from what was once a stand alone department, under Mulroney, to a small branch within NRCan, with a budget less than half the amount of subsidies the same department provides to the nuclear industry.

The Canadian Forest Service (CFS) provides easily accessible and meaningful information on national forest trends in its annual State of the Forests Reports. It also continues to fund First Nations Forestry Programs, the Model Forests Initiative and conduct research on carbon sequestration and climate change indicators, such as the potential for drought in the borders of the boreal and prairie ecosystems.

One new effort in pursuit of the controversial Forests 2020 programme is an agreement with the Tree Ontario Foundation aimed at afforestation (ie. planting in areas not currently forest) on private lands. CFS is undertaking this work in Ontario in collaboration with Conservation Authorities. So long as planting is done exclusively with species indigenous to the area, this could be a very positive programme. Such tree planting is urgently needed in all the remaining areas of the Carolinian forest ecosystem. Many private land owners would be keen on participation in restoring the most threatened forest ecosystem in Canada. The Carolinian forest is reduced to less than 10 percent of its original area, hemmed in by agriculture, urban sprawl and highways. The CFS-Tree Ontario goal is modest – 6,000 hectares planted by the end of 2005.

CFS newsletters increasingly recognize public concern for the boreal. The federal minister of NRCan, John Efford, extolled the multiple benefits of the boreal in the spring 2005 edition:

“The boreal forest contributes to our quality of life...It is our responsibility to ensure that the boreal forest continues to provide the social, economic and environmental benefits that Canadians value so much.”

Yet, the same department is pushing hard for industrial mega-projects that now constitute the biggest threat to the unfragmented northern boreal. The expansion of the Athabasca tar sands will lead to the local extinction of herds of woodland caribou, while the Mackenzie gas project threatens to industrialize one of Canada's last fragile and intact wilderness areas.

The Government of Canada must at some point in the near future confront its competing policies. Pressing for oil and gas while claiming to want to protect the boreal forest and implement the Kyoto Protocol is like trying to put out a fire, while throwing on more logs.

.

## BULLETIN DE NOTES POUR LES GOUVERNEMENTS PROVINCIALES

### QUÉBEC

#### Biodiversité

##### **Note pour 2005 : B-**

Note pour 2004 : B

Note pour 2003 : B

Note pour 2002 : D

Note pour 2001 : D-

Note pour 2000 : D

Note pour 1999 : F

Note pour 1998 : F

Note pour 1997 : D-

Note pour 1996 : C+

Note pour 1995 : C+

Note pour 1994 : D

(Il n'y a pas eu d'évaluation en 1993.)

La note pour 2005 reflète les politiques forestières progressistes adoptées au cours de la dernière année, mais aussi les progrès plus grands encore qu'il reste à faire sur le plan de la stratégie provinciale en matière d'aires protégées. Le Québec est loin d'atteindre son objectif d'élève sous-doué consistant à protéger 8 % des aires naturelles de la province d'ici la fin de cette année.

D'autres aspects négatifs sont le détournement de la rivière Rupert, qui causera un préjudice grave à l'esturgeon jaune et à une sous-espèce de truite et fera augmenter les concentrations de mercure dans les poissons, et le projet de construction d'une centrale hydroélectrique privée sur la rivière Magpie, sur la Basse-Côte-Nord, qui entraînera la destruction d'une magnifique chute et de rapides de niveau international.

Les préoccupations du Sierra Club du Canada quant aux intentions de Québec d'exploiter les réserves pétrolières et gazières de la péninsule de Gaspé, une région qui contient quelques-unes des dernières rivières à saumon atlantique de l'Amérique du Nord, ont aussi fait baisser la note du Québec.

Bien que l'absence de progrès en matière de protection de secteurs écologiques clés, la poursuite du projet de détournement de la rivière Rupert et l'indécision face à la protection de la rivière Magpie ne soient pas des facteurs encourageants, le progrès dans la mise en œuvre des recommandations de la Commission Coulombe fait monter la note du Québec. Le cycle actuel de gestion des ressources forestières a été prolongé jusqu'à 2008 afin de permettre une révision en profondeur de la méthode de calcul de la possibilité annuelle de coupe, jugée discutable par cette Commission. Entre-temps, la possibilité de coupe a été réduite de 20 % sur l'ensemble du territoire de la province. Dans certaines régions, telles

que les régions visées par le régime forestier adapté qui fait partie de l'Entente Québec-Cris, la réduction de la possibilité de coupe a été portée à 25 %. Il s'agit d'un geste sans précédent de la part d'une province canadienne, qui mérite un concert de louange!

Cette année également, le Québec s'est opposé, de concert avec l'Ontario, aux détournements d'envergure de l'eau des Grands Lacs proposés par le Council of Great Lakes Governors. La note du Québec ne s'est malheureusement pas même maintenue, ce qui est regrettable étant donné la recommandation à la Commission Coulombe, mais, vu l'absence de progrès en matière de protection des ressources naturelles, elle a baissé légèrement en 2005.

### **Changements climatiques**

#### **Note pour 2005 : B-**

Note pour 2004 : B+

Note pour 2003 : A-

Note pour 2002 : B+

Note pour 2001 : B-

Note pour 2000 : B

Note pour 1999 : C+

Note pour 1998 : B-

Note pour 1997 : D-

Note pour 1996 : D+

Note pour 1995 : C+

Note pour 1994 : D

(Il n'y a pas eu d'évaluation en 1993.)

Québec continue d'être un des chefs de file provinciaux à l'égard des changements climatiques. Son bulletin de notes n'est cependant pas parfait. La province n'a toujours pas de plan pour atteindre ses propres objectifs de Kyoto. Les événements de 2005 montrent que le véritable leadership au Québec est assumé par les citoyens militants.

Grâce à l'immense tollé soulevé dans la population par le projet de centrale thermique au gaz naturel du Suroît piloté par Hydro-Québec, le gouvernement québécois a été forcé de renoncer au projet après l'avoir approuvé. À elle seule, cette centrale aurait fait augmenter de 2,6 % les émissions de gaz à effet de serre du Québec. Alors que dans la plupart des régions du Canada, une centrale au gaz naturel aurait été considérée comme un changement bénéfique, du point de vue des changements climatiques, par rapport au charbon, il s'agissait plutôt, au Québec, d'un pas dans la mauvaise direction. Plus de 5000 personnes ont défilé par une froide journée de janvier pour s'opposer au projet Suroît.

Par la suite, la Régie de l'énergie du Québec a été mandatée pour examiner l'offre et la demande énergétiques de la province.

Après avoir tenu des audiences publiques, la Régie a déclaré qu'il était réaliste pour la province d'augmenter considérablement sa production d'énergie de source éolienne tout en améliorant son rendement énergétique. Elle concluait que la centrale Suroît n'était pas essentielle pour répondre aux besoins énergétiques du Québec.

Depuis lors, le gouvernement a demandé à Hydro-Québec de lancer un appel d'offres pour la production de 1000 mégawatts additionnels d'énergie éolienne. Le plan d'approvisionnement d'Hydro-Québec pour 2005-2010 (publié le 6 mai, 2005) a fixé un objectif de 3 TWh d'ici 2010. Hydro-Québec a investi plus d'un milliard de dollars pour atteindre cet objectif.

Le gouvernement devrait concentrer ses efforts dans le but d'opérer une transition vers l'énergie durable en créant des mesures incitatives ou en finançant des programmes de chauffage géothermique, de développement de l'énergie solaire et d'amélioration du rendement de l'électricité. Il devrait aussi promouvoir l'efficacité énergétique pour d'autres sources d'énergie (gaz, biomasse, etc.), encourager le transport en commun, créer des mesures incitatives à l'achat de véhicules et d'appareils plus efficaces et améliorer les codes du bâtiment sur le plan de l'efficacité énergétique.

Enfin, le gouvernement Charest doit renoncer à son intention d'exploiter les éventuelles sources de combustibles fossiles du Saint-Laurent, cesser de promouvoir des moyens d'augmenter la part de marché du gaz naturel et rejeter la possibilité de moderniser la centrale nucléaire de Gentilly 2.

*Note de la rédaction : bien qu'il n'en ait pas été question dans l'évaluation des treize dernières années, il faut noter que le point le plus faible de la performance environnementale du Québec est son soutien à l'industrie porcine. Les activités de cette industrie menacent l'approvisionnement local en eau de même que la santé des résidents. Des mesures de contrôle de ces activités sont attendues depuis très longtemps.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The RIO Report Card is coordinated by the Sierra Club of Canada as a continuation of the Rio Watch Process, launched in June 1992. For over 13 years we have collaborated with other environment and development groups across Canada in researching, writing and grading the performance of the federal, provincial and territorial governments.

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The opinions expressed are those of the Sierra Club of Canada, as are any errors.

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