

PROBEABILITIES

A REPORT TO POLLUTION PROBE MEMBERS



Canada Lags Other Countries in the Availability of Fuel Efficient Vehicles

Consumers enjoy more choice of fuel efficient vehicles where stringent fuel efficiency standards exist.

Pollution Probe recently released a report titled, “A Global Survey of Highly Fuel Efficient, Low Greenhouse Gas Emitting Vehicles”. This report reveals that consumers who live in Europe and Japan — jurisdictions that have tough vehicle fuel efficiency standards — enjoy a wider range of choice than consumers who are shopping for new fuel efficient vehicles in Canada. Survey results show that, worldwide, there are more than 200 highly fuel efficient, low greenhouse-gas emitting vehicle models. Only 15 are available in North America — and seven of these are designed to run on non-conventional fuels, such as natural gas, electricity or ethanol.


The new report examines the state of vehicle fuel efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions performance in major auto jurisdictions around the world. In jurisdictions with stringent standards and higher fuel prices, automakers compete for customers by providing a wider range of fuel efficient models from which to choose.

Europe and Japan implemented fuel efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions standards years ago to deal with climate change. Now European and Japanese consumers enjoy an abundant choice of vehicles engineered to produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions (because they

burn less fuel per kilometer driven). They have access to vehicles in all shapes and sizes, incorporating a range of technologies that get better mileage than most vehicles sold in Canada. Consumers in these regions also enjoy the benefits of fuel savings, while consumers in Canada and the US struggle with rising fuel prices.

Pollution Probe is pressing for Canada to introduce fuel efficiency standards that are world-class. The question is whether Canada will be a leader or a laggard in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation.

In Canada, approximately 25 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions come from the transportation sector, half of which are from personal vehicles (e.g., passenger cars, minivans, pickup trucks, SUVs). The government of Canada has committed to implement fuel consumption regulations for new vehicles sold in Canada, beginning with the 2011 model year. Pollution Probe has called for the new standards to be world-class and benchmarked against leading jurisdictions around the world.

To download “A Global Survey of Highly Fuel Efficient, Low Greenhouse Gas Emitting Vehicles”, click www.pollutionprobe.org/Publications/Air.htm. 

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In Memoriam

2007 saw the passing of two individuals who stood out in their passionate commitment to, and support of, environmental causes and Pollution Probe.



Bluma Appel, O.C., O.Ont., is well-known for her strong, zealous support for a wide range of charitable causes in the arts, health and the environment. Her contribution to Pollution Probe extended far beyond material support. For many years Bluma lent her help to us by serving as Chair of our Advisory Board. At Pollution Probe we rejoice in her generosity as we mourn

her passing. Her longtime support for our organization is another example of the breadth of her caring and understanding about the important matters that will affect future generations.



Dr. Donald Chant, O.C., was one of Pollution Probe's founders — a professor at the University of Toronto who adopted a group of eager students who wanted to change the world by eliminating pollution. By giving Pollution Probe a home in the Zoology Department that he chaired in 1969, and by acting as mentor to those young students, Don ensured his

lasting legacy as a founder of environmentalism in Canada. At Pollution Probe we still strive to follow his example by adhering to the highest standards of scientific accountability while we engage in public education and advocacy.

* * * * *

Probably environmental causes would have gripped Canadian public awareness if Ms Appel and Dr. Chant had not championed them so prophetically, but those causes would not have reached the corridors of power so effectively if these two visionaries had not served as beacons for two or three generations of Canadian philanthropists and advocates. We will miss them deeply as we endeavour to carry on their legacies. P

Clean Air Commute 2007

Pollution Probe's annual Clean Air Campaign and Commute[®] covered the GTA with clean commuting messages for the fifteenth straight year. While participants from 125 companies hiked, biked, bused and carpooled to work — sparing the air 599 tonnes of pollutants in one week — the 100% donated, \$1.5 million advertising campaign blanketed subway stations, busbacks, television, radio, newspapers and Cineplex Odeon theatres with the clean commuting message.

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Toronto Transit Commission P

Reduction and Elimination of Mercury in Products: Improvements on the Horizon

Mercury is a neurotoxicant, meaning it can damage the brain and nervous system, and is a suspected endocrine disruptor, meaning it can damage the reproductive and hormonal development and growth of fetuses and infants. The health effects associated with exposure to mercury include permanent brain damage, central nervous system disorders, memory loss, heart disease, kidney failure, liver damage, loss of vision, loss of sensation and tremors. The severity of the health effect depends on the level of mercury exposure.

According to Environment Canada, the total amount of elemental mercury used in products in Canada in 2003 was approximately 10,000 kg. Mercury is used in a variety of different products because it is a good conductor of electricity and it reacts predictably to temperature and pressure changes. However, most products that contain mercury could be replaced by mercury-free alternatives that are reliable, cost-effective and safe.

The mercury found in products may be released to the environment at a number of different stages — during manufacturing, when products are broken while in use, when products are crushed in garbage trucks and when products are dumped in landfills, burned in incinerators or discharged to sewer systems.

Pollution Probe's mercury programme has been active for over a decade, with the aim of implementing a national strategy to ban mercury-containing products where mercury-free alternatives exist and to increase the collection and recycling of existing mercury-containing products, especially for products for which alternatives have yet to be developed (e.g., compact fluorescent light bulbs). While it has been a difficult and sometimes frustrating decade, there are now federal and Ontario provincial mercury policies on the horizon.

The federal government is currently developing proposed policy instruments to ban the sale, import and distribution of mercury-containing products, excluding mercury-containing dental amalgam and lamps. The regulation is not yet finalized and the timing for implementation is unknown. In the meantime, consultative meetings have been scheduled for February 2008 in Toronto and Vancouver, and public comments are invited on the consultation document, which is available at www.ec.gc.ca/CEPARRegistry/documents/part/wmd-dgd/pro-ris.cfm. Comments will be accepted until March 7, 2008.

In Ontario, the government has developed a proposed Municipal Hazardous or Special Waste (MHSW) programme that targets the collection and recycling of hazardous and special waste, including mercury-containing products, from homes and small businesses. Delivering the MHSW programme in two phases, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment intends to address the collection and recycling of batteries (some of which contain mercury) in the first phase, and fluorescent light bulbs and tubes, mercury-containing switches (i.e., in cars and appliances) and measuring devices that contain mercury (i.e., thermostats, thermometers and barometers) in the second phase. Timing and targets for Ontario's MHSW programme have yet to be set.

Pollution Probe will continue to push for the rapid implementation of both the federal ban and Ontario's collection programme, and will update readers on our progress in future newsletters.

While more work is required for a mercury-free environment, we are pleased with some outcomes as a result of our ongoing efforts! **P**

Lighting Options



Incandescent Light Bulb



Compact Fluorescent Light Bulb (CFLs) —

CFLs use up to 75 per cent less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and can last up to 10 times as long.¹



Light Emitting Diode (LED) Bulb —

LEDs use at least 80 per cent less energy than incandescent bulbs and can last 10 times as long as CFLs and 100 times longer than standard incandescent bulbs.²

¹ www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls

² www.eartheasy.com/live_energyeff_lighting.htm

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The Impacts of Climate Change and Preparing to Adapt

Pollution Probe is taking a lead role in addressing Canada's need to evaluate potential impacts and prepare to adapt to climate change. Designing adaptation measures will become increasingly important as the climate continues to change and the effects become more severe.

Mitigation measures — efforts to slow or halt the effects of climate change, such as through greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions — are just as important as ever, but they can only be part of the strategy. The fact is, we face a future where the climate will change, and the nations, people, industries, communities and ecosystems of the world will have to adapt. The effectiveness of mitigation measures will determine how severe the impacts will be and how we will need to adapt.

Mitigation is still a moving target. In 2007 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released their fourth assessment report. Their findings make the strongest case to date that human activities, specifically fossil fuel combustion and land use change, are causing changes in the global climate system. Each of the three previous assessment reports issued a call to the global community for decisive action to reduce the risks of climate change. The fourth assessment report contains the strongest call so far.

In the context of increasingly strident warnings from the scientific community, Canada has not developed a compelling action plan to combat climate change. Canada's performance at the Bali COP-13 Convention on Climate Change last December was widely criticized at home and abroad for weakening the final "Bali roadmap" agreement and the mandated GHG emissions reduction targets for 2020. Domestically, successive Canadian governments have not achieved a national consensus on a climate change strategy and action plan to meet our GHG reduction commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.

Canada's leaders have a large body of analysis and recommendations to draw upon. This includes Pollution Probe's extensive work on impacts and adaptation, beginning with our first conference on climate variability, atmospheric change and human health in November 1996. Over the past 10 years, Pollution Probe has produced two significant reports on the need to adapt to climate change — one directed at the health care system and another at source water protection planning (see

page 5). We have also produced a *Primer on Climate Change and Human Health*.

Pollution Probe's Climate Change Programme Director and Senior Scientist, Dr. Quentin Chiotti, has contributed to two national assessments on climate change. He is co-lead author of the Ontario chapter of the report "From Impacts to Adaptation: Canada in a Changing Climate" led by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) and a contributor to an assessment led by Health Canada on climate change and human health. Both reports are expected to be released early in 2008. (Check our website for further details.)

Canadians should not be surprised at the impacts these reports will highlight. Across Canada over the past decade there have been many extreme weather events and changes in average temperature conditions that illustrate how the climate is changing. Warmer temperatures, especially in the winter, more intense precipitation events, and more frequent and extreme storms, floods and droughts, have caused considerable harm to Canada's ecosystems, economy and infrastructure. For example, severe storms have damaged urban parks and forests in Vancouver and Halifax, storm surges have affected coastal areas in Nova Scotia, and precipitation from record rain storms have overwhelmed critical infrastructure in Toronto, Stratford and Peterborough.

But it isn't only extreme events that we need to worry about. Warmer temperatures have reduced ice cover in the Canadian Arctic, facilitated the rapid spread of the Mountain Pine Beetle, shortened the winter road season in northern regions, and contributed to lower water levels in the Great Lakes. These changes have adversely affected Polar Bear habitat, traditional lifestyles, the forestry sector and single resource communities. They have contributed to increasing shipping costs and have negatively impacted wetlands and aquatic ecosystems. In Ontario, human health effects have also been felt, including more heat waves and heat-related deaths, more smog episodes and associated health costs, water disease outbreaks, such as Walkerton, and the rapid spread of ecological conditions that support previously isolated vector-borne diseases, such as Lyme Disease.

All regions of Canada are experiencing changes in climate, and in the future the impacts that are already being felt will become even greater. Some positive

continued on next page

An Opportunity to Mainstream Climate Change with Ontario's New Source Protection Planning

Excerpted from Pollution Probe's report, Mainstreaming Climate Change in Drinking Water Source Protection Planning in Ontario by Rob de Loë and Aaron Berg.

Climate change is real, and it's already happening. In the Great Lakes Basin, a region where numerous studies have been completed in the past decade, noticeable trends have been observed in the following:

- Mean annual air temperature has increased across the basin
- Annual precipitation has increased, but more is falling as rain and less as snow, and there is a greater frequency of extreme events
- Snow depth has been reduced
- Both wet and dry periods have increased.

Projected warming is expected to produce many more changes like these, with significant implications for the hydrologic cycle.

Because of the way it affects the hydrologic cycle, global climate change is also a local problem with which conservation authorities, municipalities, Ontario's provincial government and water users will have to deal. Consequently, the water management, land use planning, and infrastructure decisions that are being made today should account for the ways in which climate change will affect water resources. The challenge is to build climate change into day-to-day activities; in other words, to mainstream it in water management and land use planning.

continued on page 7

Impacts and Adaptations *continued from page 4*

impacts may occur, such as increased navigability in Arctic marine waters and increased hydroelectricity output in Quebec, but overall the impacts are likely to be negative, including:

- Implications for Aboriginal communities maintaining traditional lifestyles;
- More storm events, rising sea level, and higher storm surges — these will cause greater coastal erosion and flooding, affecting coastal communities, infrastructure and industry;
- Climate-related disruptions to critical infrastructure, such as water treatment and distribution systems, electricity transmission and distribution, and transportation;
- More heat waves and smog episodes, and an increase in associated health costs;
- Increases in water scarcity and droughts, impacting agriculture and communities dependent upon them; and

- Implications for forests, forest industry, and forest-dependent communities already vulnerable to climate-related risks, including pest infestations and fire.

It is anticipated that the release of the NRCan and Health Canada reports on impacts and adaptation will provide further evidence that all levels of government, communities, industry and individuals will have to take climate change more seriously. All concerned Canadians should press their elected representatives to act now. On one hand, government leaders should implement more stringent policies to reduce GHG emissions faster. On the other hand, they cannot ignore preparing for adaptation measures. An approach to climate change that incorporates both mitigation and adaptation measures is needed. **P**

Recent Activities

Ken Ogilvie, Pollution Probe's Executive Director, recently testified before the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development in Ottawa. Ken's submission was in support of Bill C-377, the so-called *Climate Change Accountability Act*.

You can read this submission on our website. Go to www.pollutionprobe.org/Publications and follow the link to "View Pollution Probe's Comments on Legislation, Regulations and Policies" from January 2008.

Ken Ogilvie also recently served as one of three members of the Green Ribbon Panel appointed by the Auditor General of Canada, Sheila Fraser, to review the Environmental and Sustainable Development Practice of the Office of the Auditor General. Ms Fraser has agreed to all nine of the Green Panel's recommendations. You can find the Green Ribbon Panel report, entitled *Fulfilling the Potential*, at the Auditor General's website at www.oag-bvg.gc.ca.

HONOUR ROLL

The following individuals have generously supported Pollution Probe's work during the 12 months ending March 31, 2007. To all who support our environmental mission, thank you.

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Mainstreaming Climate Change in Stormwater Protection *continued from page 4*

Source protection planning in Ontario, under the *Clean Water Act*, provides an outstanding opportunity to mainstream climate change. Under the *Clean Water Act*, local stakeholders are being organized into Source Protection Committees to develop Source Protection Plans at the watershed-scale. These plans will build on detailed assessment reports. Among the many topics covered in these reports, watershed characterization and water budgets are especially pertinent for climate change.

In watershed characterizations, teams involved in source protection planning will develop watershed-wide overviews of land uses and activities, water resources, and threats to drinking water safety. In water budgets, relationships between inputs of water, withdrawals of water, and storage in watershed will be represented — at first, conceptually, but then quantitatively.

While preparing watershed characterizations, Source Protection Committees should consider how climate change will influence vulnerable areas; the need for, and vulnerability of, future drinking water sources; and the quality of water sources that supply drinking water. Because watershed characterizations are the foundation of the assessment report, and because assessment reports will guide source protection plans and resulting activities, building climate change into watershed characterizations is critical.

In creating detailed, quantitative water budgets, Source Protection Committees should be able to provide local understanding of the impacts of climate change on


hydrology that has been difficult to incorporate in regional studies of climate impacts completed to date. Technical challenges exist relating to incorporating climate change in water budgets. However, this report demonstrates (in Appendix A) that these are resolvable. Indeed, several conservation authorities in Ontario already have been building climate change into their hydrologic and water quality models.

Many other opportunities exist for addressing climate change in the source protection planning process. Nonetheless, being able to address climate change in

watershed characterizations and water budgets would represent significant progress towards mainstreaming climate change into water management.

At the outset of source protection planning, it may not be possible to address climate change satisfactorily in initial watershed characterizations and water budgets in all source protection areas. However, this does not

mean that the opportunity has been missed. Source protection planning must be an ongoing, long-term undertaking. Plans will have to be updated continually anyway because everything else is changing. Therefore, climate change can be mainstreamed in subsequent plans as data gaps are closed, skills are developed and experience is gained.

Mainstreaming Climate Change in Drinking Water Source Protection Planning in Ontario by Rob de Loë and Aaron Berg is available to download from the Pollution Probe website at www.pollutionprobe.org/publications. 




Pollution Probe Gala 2007

Pollution Probe's 2007 fundraising Gala was again a great success as a social event and a fundraiser to promote our environmental work. This year the theme "Get Around" drew attention to Pollution Probe's Transportation Programme. Headed by Director Bob Oliver, our Transportation Programme focuses on ways to reduce the environmental impact of vehicular mobility.

This year's speaker was Brian Jean, who, as Parliamentary Assistant, filled in admirably when federal Transportation Minister Lawrence Cannon was unavoidably detained. Rob MacIsaac, Chair of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, served as Master of Ceremonies. Rob took a second turn as the leader of *Slow Monday*, the evening's classic rock entertainers.

Thanks to all who helped Pollution Probe raise spirits and funds for our important work, especially our sponsors:

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Green Budget Coalition 2008 Budget Recommendations


Pollution Probe has worked with Canada's leading environmental and conservation groups, through the Green Budget Coalition, to develop and submit our collective recommendations for the 2008 federal budget to Finance Minister Jim Flaherty and all other parliamentarians. We expect them to receive substantial consideration, after the 2007 budget made progress on all five of the Coalition's priority 2007 budget recommendations.

These 2008 recommendations focus on:

- 1. Carbon Pricing:** Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by setting a price for these harmful emissions of at least \$30/tonne carbon dioxide equivalent by 2009, and at least \$75/tonne by 2020, using a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade system with auctioned permits. The revenues raised could finance further reductions in GHG emissions, and also offset related cost increases for low-income Canadians.
- 2. Renewing the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region:** Developing and investing in a comprehensive, long-term sustainability strategy to restore, protect and enhance the

environment of this region where 25% of Canadians live. Priority investments should be for upgrading water and wastewater infrastructure, and cleaning up Areas of Concern and *Zones d'intervention prioritaire*.

- 3) Action on Nature:** Conserving both marine and terrestrial biodiversity by implementing commitments to establish networks of federal protected areas on land and in our oceans and to ensure their long-term ecological integrity. Investing \$1 billion over 5 years would create 11 new national parks, 35 new marine protected areas, reinvigorate our network of National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries, and convert 2 million acres of cropland to permanent cover and riparian protection improving water quality.

The Coalition also recommends ending mining subsidies, ramping up energy efficiency and renewable energy efforts, conserving inventory lands and migratory birds, and implementing better indicators. See www.greenbudget.ca/2008/main.html for the full document, *Big Steps Forward: Recommendations for Budget 2008*. 



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Publisher/Editor
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Circulation/Donor Services
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Comet art + design

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ISSN
1499-0377

Layout
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Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled, process chlorine-free paper, using vegetable-based inks.



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