

CANADA-UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

NEWS RELEASE

The Canada-United States Environmental Council has called on both nations to take decisive steps to curb acid precipitation, including prompt agreement on an air-quality treaty designed to reduce sulphur and nitrogen oxide and toxic metal emissions to 1955 levels.

The council has also urged congressional extension and strengthening of the United States' Clean Air Act, which expires this year.

The actions of the bi-national non-governmental body were taken March 22 at a meeting in Washington, D.C. The four-day meeting was attended by delegates from 35 environmental organizations in the two countries.

In its acid precipitation resolution, CUSEC said both nations should immediately institute requirements for the washing of all coal being burned in existing facilities and the use of the newest anti-pollution devices before resorting to older equipment. Government agencies also were called on to grant unrestricted public access to all emission data.

The council pointed out that deadly acid precipitation is threatening thousands of lakes in both nations.

The delegates also called for steps to curb carbon dioxide emissions and long-range transport of other pollutants, and steps to maintain air quality in national parks, wilderness and other pristine areas. Other anti-pollution resolutions called for stepped-up actions against toxic wastes in the Great Lakes and a ban on ocean nuclear-waste dumping.

CUSEC urged Canada to establish a major park or wildlife preserve in northern Yukon Territory to complement the United States' Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The proposed preserve would help to sustain the 120,000-animal Porcupine caribou herd, shared by the two nations.

Also urged were the creation of a marine sanctuary in the Beaufort Sea and launching of a major study of Beaufort whales and other marine life before permitting further offshore drilling in this Arctic area. The council said it 'deplores' continuation of Beaufort Sea oil and gas activity without adequate scientific studies looking toward protection of natural values.

In other actions, CUSEC:

Urged the two nations to negotiate a treaty for the management and protection of the Porcupine caribou herd and its habitat.

Called for U.S.-Canadian support of an adequate global Law of the Sea treaty to regulate deep and seabed mining.

Urged the two nations to back a worldwide commercial whaling moratorium.

Urged conclusion of a treaty to protect marine resources on Georges Bank, off the east coast.

Called for U.S. and Canadian leadership on behalf of an Antarctic 'world preserve' and other steps to protect Antarctic marine life in the context of proposals for oil and gas exploration in the region.

Urged that alternatives be found to forestall increased Canadian electricity exports to the U.S. because of the adverse environmental implications of Canadian power development.

Urged halting the Garrison Diversion Project in North Dakota until it is modified to protect Canadian rights under the Boundary Waters Treaty.