

Provincial Governments Still Failing on Climate Change Sept 24, 2001

Ontario's Policies Promote Continued Greenhouse Gas Emission Increases

OTTAWA - As federal and provincial Energy and Environment ministers meet today in Winnipeg to discuss climate change, the Pembina Institute is releasing a new report card¹ showing that the governments of Alberta, British Columbia, Québec, Ontario and Saskatchewan are all failing to make an adequate effort to support Canada's commitment under the Kyoto Protocol. Ontario scored a mark of only 30.5% in the Institute's detailed assessment.

"The Ontario government's few minor positive actions are overwhelmed by two extremely negative policies that promise continued increases in Ontario's greenhouse gas emissions: major highway expansions, and continued support for coal-fired electricity," said Dr. Matthew Bramley, Director, Climate Change at the Pembina Institute and author of the report. "In light of Canada's intention to ratify the Kyoto Protocol in 2002, Ontario needs to take substantive action now to reduce emissions in all areas."

The Pembina Institute's assessment considered 38 different policy initiatives provincial governments could take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in nine separate areas. While provincial governments scored failing marks in most areas, rare passing marks were obtained by Québec's efforts on transportation, and by the progress of Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan in reducing emissions from government operations. Ontario failed in all areas.

Total marks scored were: Alberta-31.5%; British Columbia-39%; Ontario-30.5%; Québec-34.5%; Saskatchewan-26%. Compared to an identical assessment carried out by the Institute one year ago, Québec has made the most significant improvement. British Columbia retains its lead from last year, but the Institute cautioned that its leadership position is seriously threatened by the new government's apparent abandonment of the province's climate change business plan. Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan have made little progress compared to last year.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, Canada is required to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 6% below the 1990 level in the period 2008-2012. Canada's emissions, however, actually increased by 15% between 1990 and 1999, and government projections made in that year indicated that emissions would be 27% above the 1990 level in 2010 if no additional actions were taken to address climate change. Ontario's emissions in 2010 are projected to be 17% above the 1990 level in the absence of new policy measures.

For more information contact:

Mark Winfield, 613-235-6288 ext 25

Matthew Bramley, Director, Climate Change, 613-235-6288 ext 26

¹ The report can be downloaded at www.pembina.org.