

ECC: BRITISH COLUMBIA/WASHINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE

Terms of Reference

Mandate/Purpose:

The Initiative's mandate is derived from the Environmental Cooperation Agreement between the two jurisdictions entered into in May 1992. The Initiative's purpose is to ensure coordinated action and information-sharing on environmental matters of mutual concern.

Members: Deputy Minister, BC Environment, Lands and Parks

Director, Washington Department of Ecology

Observers: Regional Director General, Pacific and Yukon Region, Environment Canada Administrator, Region 10, US Environmental Protection Agency

Support: Administrative support will be provided by BC Environment, Lands and Parks and the Washington Department of Ecology who will be jointly responsible to prepare agendas, ensure appropriate attendance at Initiative meetings and coordinate follow-up action.

Procedures:

- The Initiative will generally meet twice each year, or as necessary.
- The Initiative may establish sub-committees to deal with specific matters.
- The Initiative may, by formal agreement, establish Task Forces to address issues of special or major significance.
- An Annual Report will be made to the Premier of British Columbia and the Governor of Washington.

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Preliminary Action Plan/Work Priorities

British Columbia and Washington's commitment to cooperative efforts on environmental matters has resulted in the identification of the following priority issues for action:

1. Georgia Basin/Puget Sound Water Quality Initiative

Georgia Basin/Puget Sound water quality is considered to be a high priority issue and requires immediate joint attention. Concerted efforts are underway by both governments

to identify and remedy pollution problems in the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound. Coordination of these programs will enhance their environmental benefits.

2. Columbia River/Lake Roosevelt Water Quality

Columbia River/Lake Roosevelt Water Quality is considered to be a high priority issue by both parties and requires immediate joint attention.

A task force involving affected interest groups will examine the issues and ensure necessary action is taken to control sources and protect water quality.

3. Nooksack River Flooding

Nooksack River flooding is considered to be a high priority issue and requires continued joint attention. Recent flooding in Washington's Nooksack River resulted in flooding in British Columbia's West Sumas area. Continued attention is needed to ensure implementation of the recommendations of a Task Force that identified actions needed to avert recurrence of such problems.

4. Regional Air Quality Management

Regional air quality management is considered to be a high priority issue in the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound airshed and requires timely joint attention.

Issues such as transboundary flows of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds should be addressed in an integrated manner through regional implementation of the Canada/U.S. Air Quality Agreement. 2

5. Coordinated Groundwater Management (Sumas-Abbotsford)

Management of the groundwater in the Sumas-Abbotsford area is considered to be a high priority issue and requires immediate joint attention.

The aquifers are of particular concern as a result of domestic use on both sides of the border. Improved coordination of the activities of all parties to address both groundwater quantity and quality will encourage more effective resolution.

6. Solid, Hazardous and Biomedical Waste Cooperation

Waste management is considered to be an emerging issue and should be the subject of information exchange and further discussion. The transboundary impacts of waste management practices and contaminated sites should be examined through mechanisms such as the Memorandum of Understanding on Hazardous Waste Management.

7. Water Resource Management

Water management in general is considered to be an emerging issue and should be the subject of information exchange and further discussion.

Increased water use in response to growing needs necessitates protection of instream flows; this requires sound data and thorough field investigations. Joint efforts can ensure efficiency and maximum productivity for both governments.

8. Wetlands Protection

The protection of wetlands and wildlife habitat is considered to be an issue of ongoing interest to both parties. The exchange of information on wetland and habitat protection programs will form the basis for initial cooperation on this issue.

9. Other Issues

The parties agree to use the Initiative to identify and address issues of concern, and will assist each other in dealing with the agencies and departments of their respective governments. Potential issues for discussion include: earthquake and emergency preparedness and State of Environment rep