

## Canadian Air Quality Management System (AQMS)

In recent years, the federal government had begun efforts to control air emissions under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (CEPA). Canada now plans to adopt new air quality standards for industry and other emitters. The Air Quality Management System (AQMS) is important because it will provide consistent ambient air quality and industrial emissions standards across the country, which will simplify the process of emissions monitoring for businesses operating in multiple jurisdictions.

The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) approved AQMS in October 2010 and CCME is working with industry, government, and non-government organizations to implement it. Stakeholders in the regulated community support this approach to air management.

The key components of AQMS are:

*Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS)* – health-based air quality objectives for pollutant concentrations in outdoor air.

*Place-based air quality management* – Six regional air-sheds have been established covering all of Canada. The federal government will work to understand regional air quality issues and coordinate action to address air pollution, including trans-boundary pollution from the United States and elsewhere. Provinces and territories will manage air quality in air zones that they will establish within their boundaries, and work to ensure that ambient air standards are met in all air zones. The federal government will facilitate monitoring and analysis under its National Air Pollution Surveillance Program.

*Base-Level Industrial Emissions Requirements (BLIERs)* – BLIERs are intended to ensure that all significant industrial air emissions sources in Canada meet a good base-level of environmental performance. The BLIERs are to be based on what leading jurisdictions are requiring of industry in areas achieving their air quality standards, adjusted as needed for Canadian circumstances. New facilities will have to meet their BLIERs beginning the first day of operation. Existing facilities will be expected to meet the BLIERs for their sector by a specified date. When implemented, BLIERs are expected to reduce industrial emissions by 19 percent for NO<sub>x</sub>, 24 percent for SO<sub>2</sub>, and 9 percent for TPM.

This collaborative federal, provincial, territorial and stakeholder framework will:

- Focus on air quality and all the sources that contribute to it
- Ensure that a common standard of industrial performance exists across Canada
- Provide for increasingly stringent measures where local conditions require them
- Build on the existing expertise and strengths of governments
- Establish a new collaborative partnership with governments as well as stakeholders
- Provide greater public transparency and stronger assurance of action on air quality

### Recommendations

That the federal government:

1. Ensure that their role in managing Canadian air quality is focused on CAAQS, BLIERs, air-zone development and establishment, and on controls related to transportation, and not create federal air emission controls under CEPA that would be duplicative of the provincial controls already in place.
2. Increase its national ambient air monitoring network by integrating the existing provincial and municipal systems, and also ensure prompt and public reporting of the data generated from those systems.