

Government Report Projects Lower than Expected GHG Emissions in 2020



International groups aren't the only ones tracking the GHG emissions of countries such as Canada. Canada has also been tracking its own emissions. In fact, Environment Canada just released a report on the country's current GHG emissions and what they're projected to be in 2020. Here's an overview of Canada's Emissions Trends 2012.

THE REPORT

2010 Emissions: Emissions for 2010 were initially estimated to be 710 Megatonnes (Mt). But since that time, preliminary data collected by Statistics Canada and assessed for the National Inventory Report put Canada's actual emissions in 2010 at 692 Mt. In addition, per capita emissions in 2010 fell to 20.3 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per person—their lowest level since tracking began in 1990. Compared to the 2005 level (22.9 tonnes CO₂ eq/capita), per capita emissions in 2010 were 2.6 tonnes lower.

Projected Emissions for 2020: Last year, Canada's GHG emissions were projected to be 785 Mt in 2020. But the projected emissions for that year have been lowered to 720 Mt based on four factors:

- Emissions are increasingly becoming decoupled from economic growth. That is, although the economy is growing, emissions are staying relatively steady. Changes in behaviour by consumers and businesses, in part due to federal, provincial and territorial actions, are leading to this decline in emissions intensity;
- Projected sector shifts in the economy are also contributing to this improvement in emissions intensity. Projected growth for the emissions-intensive sectors is now lower, while it's higher for the less emissions-intensive sectors. Thus, projected emissions are reduced for 2020, even though total GDP is projected to be slightly higher;

- For the first time, Environment Canada included the contribution of the land use, land-use change and forestry sector to achieving Canada's target in its projections; and
- This year's projections also have a new, lower starting point as the most recent data show emissions were significantly lower in 2010 than previously estimated as discussed above.

ANALYSIS

The Environment Canada report asserts that Canada is making significant progress towards meeting its 2020 target of 607 Mt of GHG emissions. In addition to federal initiatives aimed at reducing emissions, provincial and territorial governments are contributing with significant action of their own toward their respective jurisdictional targets. In short, the future of GHG emissions in Canada will depend on a number of factors including:

- Economic activity;
- Population;
- Development of energy markets and their influence on prices;
- Technological change;
- Consumer behaviour; and
- Government actions.