

International Joint Commission
Canada and United States



Commission mixte internationale
Canada et États-Unis

September 23, 2021

Ms. Evelyne Coulombe, Director
U.S. Transboundary Affairs Division
Global Affairs Canada
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

Mr. Michael Flores, Acting Director
Office of Canadian Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Ms. Coulombe and Mr. Flores:

This letter constitutes the International Joint Commission's report to the governments of Canada and the United States in keeping with the responsibilities assigned to it under Article IX of the 1991 Canada-United States Air Quality Agreement.

Article IX of the 1991 Agreement directs the IJC to invite comments on each progress report prepared by the Canada-United States Air Quality Committee, to submit a synthesis of comments received by the governments, and to release the synthesis of comments to the public.

Comments were solicited on the 2018 Progress Report in the following ways: a public consultation website that accepted comments by webpage comment, email and written comments sent by post; a targeted email campaign inviting over 100 stakeholders to provide comment, including governments, Indigenous groups, and organizations; an article was published in IJC's *Great Lakes Connections* electronic newsletter reaching about 10,000 subscribers; and a social media campaign on IJC's social media channels reaching more than 1,300 people on Facebook and almost 35,000 on Twitter.

The comment period was open from April 1 until June 30, 2021. Despite the attempt to reach thousands of groups and individuals, only one comment was received on behalf of the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association (CVMA).

The CVMA's letter states that continued harmonization of vehicle-related regulations is key for their industry and increases the availability of technology with environmental benefits. They added that efforts, such as Canadian regulation harmonization with the United States on vehicle-related emissions and fuels, needs to be coordinated even though the Agreement provides a flexible framework for both countries. CVMA letter notes this is also being addressed by the Canada-U.S. Regulatory Cooperation Council's action plan under its Road Map of the Renewed Partnership. They had some suggestions on the report itself: provide more updated information up to 2020; include a definition of on-road and off-road transportation for the public in the Emission Inventories and Trends section; and include a

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section that celebrates the achievements reached under the Agreement. Finally, they expressed concern about the timing of the release of the 2018 Progress Report.

The IJC sees value in the Canada-United States Air Quality Agreement, in particular the pollution reductions that have been achieved and the significant scientific and technical cooperation that the agreement has facilitated.

Our experience since receiving the reference under the 1991 Air Quality Agreement has been one of diminishing returns, despite our ongoing efforts to invite comment each time a progress report of the Air Quality Committee is released. We reiterate our conclusion from our letter of April 16, 1999, that while members of the public care deeply about air quality issues, they do not perceive that commenting on the progress reports has any significant impact on government efforts aimed at addressing known transboundary air quality issues. The lack of response to the Commission's request for comments on the report reinforces the notion that this process is not perceived as an effective way for public concerns with respect to air quality to be brought forward with the expectation that they will be addressed by governments in a timely manner.

Despite the IJC's efforts to obtain public comment, the pattern of diminishing public response continued in the current cycle. As we have noted in several past transmittal letters on this file, until such time as the commitments under the Agreement are updated and expanded, public participation in the comment process may continue to be nominal.

We look forward to hearing from Governments on further courses of action to strengthen the Agreement and its capacity to improve transboundary air quality.

Sincerely,



Pierre Béland
Chair
Canadian Section



Jane Corwin
Chair
U.S. Section

Attachment: Public Comment from the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturer's Association



**Canadian Vehicle
Manufacturers' Association**
Association canadienne
des constructeurs de véhicules

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June 30, 2021

Secretary
Canadian Section
International Joint Commission (IJC)
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Subject: Canada-U.S. Air Quality Agreement – Draft 2018 Air Quality Agreement Progress report

Dear Secretary:

The Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association, representing Ford Motor Company of Canada, Limited, General Motors of Canada Company, and Stellantis (FCA Canada Inc.) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft 2018 Air Quality Agreement Progress Report.

We are pleased to receive the draft report and see that efforts are continuing between Canada and the U.S. to address transboundary air quality issues. For the automotive industry, the continued alignment of a harmonized regulatory approach for vehicles and fuels are a priority and key to ongoing improvements. As noted in the report, significant progress has been made in reducing criteria emissions from the light and heavy-duty on-road vehicle fleets through technological advancements made by the automotive industry. The same applies for GHG emissions reductions across the vehicle fleet. The harmonized regulatory approach allows for the leveraging of North American economies of scale that will continue to provide Canadians with the greatest access to advanced vehicle technologies and their commensurate environmental benefits; driving year over year reductions in criteria air contaminant (CAC) emissions as the on-road fleet is turned over. Harmonization also provides regulatory certainty in Canada and allows vehicle manufacturers to focus their efforts on meeting these progressively more stringent CAC emission regulations on a national and North American level.

The benefit of harmonized vehicle-related regulations needs to be recognized in the work undertaken by the Air Quality Agreement given that smog-related emissions are not constrained by international borders. Efforts do need to be coordinated even though the Agreement provides a flexible framework for both countries (i.e., harmonization with the U.S. on vehicle-related emissions and fuels are essential). This was recognized with the work undertaken under the Canada-U.S. Regulatory Cooperation Council's action plan and is expected to continue under the Road Map of the Renewed Partnership.

With respect to the report, we note that it outlines progress to 2018. It would have been helpful if the report outlined progress to 2020 to reflect more recent conditions. For the Emission Inventories and Trends section of the report, we believe it would be beneficial to break down what is meant by on-road and off-road transportation for the readers.

In closing, CVMA does appreciate the opportunity to share our views on the report. Some clarity about the purpose of sharing the report at this time would be helpful and recommend that the draft report include a section that celebrates the significant improvements that have been achieved and continue to be made under the Agreement in improving air quality since its signing.

I would be pleased to address any questions on our input.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yasmin Tarmohamed." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Yasmin Tarmohamed
Vice-President, Environment, Health and Safety

cc M. Cauchi, Environment and Climate Change Canada