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**CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & POLICY**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**APRIL 25, 1995**

**ENVIRONMENTAL HARMONY OR ENVIRONMENTAL DISCORD?**

**Proposed Environmental "Harmonization" Agreement Threatens  
Canada's Environment Groups Says**

An Agreement which amounts to a *de facto* constitutional amendment and which will result in the effective repeal of federal environmental laws and regulations is scheduled to be endorsed by the Federal and Provincial Ministers of the Environment at the May 15th meeting of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) in Haines Junction, Yukon.

That is the conclusion of more than 50 environmental, conservation, labour and public health organizations presented in a position paper entitled *Environmental Harmony or Environmental Discord?* released today. The groups ask that federal Environment Minister Sheila Copps not endorse the Environmental Management Framework Agreement at the May CCME meeting.

"The justification presented by the CCME for the Agreement is a fiction," said Anne Mitchell, Executive Director of the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy. "The CCME has refused to undertake a study of the problem of 'duplication and overlap' which the Agreement is purported to solve. A number of recent reports by the federal government have concluded that duplication and overlap of federal and provincial requirements is not a serious problem. What really is needed is action to deal with the gaps in environmental protection being created by the recent cuts to Environment Canada's budget" added Dr. Mark Winfield, the Institute's Director of Research.

The groups also are highly critical of the process employed by governments in the development of the EMFA. "The Canadian people must be made aware with what is at issue here. Closed door federal-provincial deal-making was decisively rejected when the Charlottetown Constitutional Accord in October, 1992 was defeated." noted Paul Muldoon, Counsel for the Canadian Environmental Law Association. "Ten years from now, will Canadians look back on 1995 and ask how did we allow the federal government to strike a deal with provinces and walk away from its responsibilities for protecting the nation's environment? The voice of Canadians must be heard in the process."

In addition to not endorsing the Agreement, the coalition asks Environment Minister Copps to:

- initiate a meaningful study of the needs and gaps in Canada's environmental protection system;
- provide a clear statement of the federal government's vision of its role in the protection of Canadians' environment; and

- refer any Framework Agreement, if concluded, to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development for public review prior to signature and ratification by the federal government.

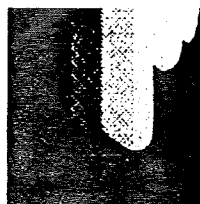
A list of signatories to *Environmental Harmony or Environmental Discord?* is attached.

For more information, or copies of *Environmental Harmony or Environmental Discord? An Analysis of the Draft Environmental Management Framework Agreement and a Statement of Principles for the Protection of Canada's Environment* contact:

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