

To: Harmonization Working Group

From: Martha Kostuch, Chair

Harmonization Working Group Update

Legal:

Pressure on the Federal Government to devolve responsibilities for environmental protection has increased as a result of the Supreme decision even though there was no duplication. The Alberta Government refused to order an environmental assessment of the road. All of the provincial government's own environmental experts recommended against approving the Mainline Road. Furthermore, twice the provincial ombudsman found the processes used by the provincial government to review and approve the road were faulty.

The decision is very good. Environmental groups all across Canada are using the decision to get full cumulative assessments of projects as required by CEAA.

General Update:

Although we have not yet received a written response to the letter I wrote on behalf of the HWG to the CCME asking for an update on implementation of the harmonization accord and subagreements, Peter, the new director general, has called me twice to give me updates. His openness is a refreshing change. He said he wants to meet with ENGOs as he travels across the country to meet with Ministers.

A status report on the Canada-Wide Accord on Environmental Harmonization was handed out at the Montreal workshop. Laurie will distribute this document as soon as she receives it from EC.

Montreal Workshop:

Five ENGOs and four industry/business representatives participated in a workshop to have input into the consultation and accountability sections of the Annex to the Accord in Montreal on July 27th & 28th. (Accountability was added to the workshop's mandate at the last minute.) We (the ENGOs) used previous HWG submissions on harmonization as the basis for most of our input.

A request for written submissions on stakeholder/public consultation and accountability was supposedly sent out to CCME's 1200 person mailing list. I urge you to consider making a written submission. (What better things do you have to do during the middle of the summer?!) Submissions must be received very soon to be considered.

The time frame for completing the annex is very short. The lead governments plan to have the annex ready to take to the Environment Ministers' meeting in September. Participants at the Montreal workshop will have a brief opportunity to review and comment on a draft of the annex.