

## REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF THE CANADA-UNITED STATES AIR QUALITY AGREEMENT STATEMENT BY CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Canada-United States (U.S.) Air Quality Agreement (AQA or Agreement) calls for Canada and the U.S. to complete a joint review and assessment of the Agreement periodically.

The review and assessment process began in 2020 with a scoping exercise, and agreement on objectives for the review and assessment, which were to:

- Review what the AQA has accomplished, including whether it is meeting its current objectives and whether emission reductions mandated by the Agreement have met the AQA objectives to:
  - Reduce the transboundary flow of air pollution;
  - Reduce concentrations of ground-level ozone; and,
  - Improve air quality in Canada and the U.S.
- Assess whether the emission reduction targets and measures in the Agreement and the commitments on technical and scientific cooperation remain appropriate for Canada/U.S. policy and science needs; and
- Determine whether new commitments and measures would be appropriate (e.g., for pollutants included under the AQA and those not currently addressed, such as PM<sub>2.5</sub>)

The work was carried out by both governments, guided by the AQA sub-committees on policy and on science. Joint draft findings were agreed in 2022 at the Canada-US Air Quality Committee meeting, and then significant work was undertaken in 2023 to streamline the report and have it peer reviewed. Peer review indicated that the Review and Assessment was robust and timely, and that the conclusions were supported by the analysis presented. One peer reviewer noted that PM<sub>2.5</sub> was the pollutant of most concern for public health in both countries.

The report found that important results have been achieved under the current AQA and that both countries have fully met their obligations, but also found that transboundary air pollution continues to impact both countries from a health and environmental perspective. The scientific and technical conclusions indicate that in order to continue to meet the objective of the AQA “to control transboundary air pollution between the two countries”, it is recommended that the Parties update the Agreement. The review and assessment process also produced a number of considerations for Parties to take into account when they update the agreement, which were based on findings of the review as well as previous discussions between the two countries on modernizing the Agreement.

The considerations highlight potential updates to the AQA such as updating existing commitments and possibly adding new commitments for pollutants not yet covered, such as PM<sub>2.5</sub>, considering whether and how to address ammonia, black carbon, and/or methane as an ozone precursor under the Agreement, modernizing the Agreement to include climate change and air pollution linkages, as well as a host of structural and administrative updates. Science cooperation on new areas such as wildfires, ammonia, and others potential areas of interest are also suggested. The two countries have agreed to use these considerations as starting point in their work to update the Agreement, expected to begin in 2024. The Review and Assessment report is planned to be publicly available in the spring of 2024.