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Environmental Assessment – Improving the Process

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On March 13, 2012, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development [issued recommendations](#) for improving the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA) process (click on [Print Format](#) for the complete report).

The recommendations focus on:

- improving timeliness;
- decreasing duplication with provincial processes;
- improving aboriginal consultation processes; and
- improving outcomes.

Expectations are that some of the recommendations of the Standing Committee will be proposed through legislative changes as part of the upcoming federal budget, scheduled for April. Other recommendations could also be addressed through changes in the regulations under CEAA.

Some of the key recommendations of the Standing Committee include:

- establishing timelines for federal environmental assessments (EA);
- exempting projects from federal EA where an EA is already required under provincial legislation;
- changing federal EA “triggers” to focus on projects of significant size;
- better incorporation of First Nations consultation into the EA process and classification of roles and responsibilities for consultation;
- improving enforcement of follow-up programs after project approval.

These recommendations, if followed through, would make the EA process more efficient, timely and accessible for project proponents, government decision-makers, First Nations and the general public and would improve coordination of federal and provincial EA processes.

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