

North America's environmental outlook: 9 topics to watch for 2011 and beyond

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What is the future for North America's environment? Much of the answer is up to us.

A new report examines the major forces and underlying trends likely to shape the environment of [North America](#) in 2030 and outlines nine areas where decisions today will affect our environmental future in varying degrees.

In fact, while the pressures on North America's environment will continue to increase over the next 20 years, the report emphasizes that it would be a mistake to assume that our choices today can't influence environmental quality down the road.

North American Environmental Outlook to 2030, released today by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), scans environmental data and projections by the United Nations Environment Program, the Organization for [Economic Cooperation](#) and Development and others to examine a range of different environmental scenarios for North America.

The nine areas to watch fall under three categories:

Greatest potential for impact by 2030

- [Energy use](#) and associated emissions, especially from

transportation and buildings

- Water use and treatment of [wastewater](#)

Most significant coming changes

- Continued and accelerated warming, especially in the Arctic
- Continued loss of terrestrial biodiversity
- Persistent ground-level ozone in urban areas

Issues deserving greater attention

- Growth in urban and built-up land area
- Freshwater quality and groundwater availability and quality
- The specific economic and health effects of environmental change
- The impact of consumption in North America on the environment in other regions and vice versa

"The year 2030 is well within our planning horizon. The scenarios examined in this report suggest taking actions to confront those changes we can best affect in the short term, preparing for [environmental change](#) that is almost inevitable but amenable to action in the longer term, and finally, strengthening our knowledge concerning emerging changes about which we know the least," said Evan Lloyd, CEC Executive Director.

More information: The full report, North American Environmental Outlook to 2030, is available online at www.cec.org/outlook

Provided by Commission for Environmental Cooperation

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