

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Canadian scientists take part in major international study on air pollution

**Ottawa, July 15, 2004** – Canadian scientists will be among more than 500 researchers from five countries involved in a major international study on the movement of air pollution. Some 40 researchers from Canada will take part in the International Consortium for Atmospheric Research on Transport and Transformation (ICARTT). The goal of the two-month long study is to better understand how air pollutants move and change as they travel over eastern North America and the North Atlantic Ocean, and how these pollutants affect air quality and our climate.

There are strong links between air pollution and health problems, especially for the elderly, children and those with respiratory and cardiac problems. A large number of studies, in Canada and elsewhere, show that air pollution is responsible for thousands of premature deaths each year in Canada, and for sending thousands more to hospitals.

In addition to measurements taken from the ground, several Canadian, American, and European aircraft, as well as an American ship will collect data between North America and Western Europe. From July 19 to August 20, scientists with Environment Canada's Meteorological Service (MSC) will participate in two airborne field studies using a Convair 580 aircraft from the National Research Council of Canada's Institute for Aerospace Research, Canada's national aerospace laboratory. They hope the research will help improve forecasting of air quality and weather, and provide a better understanding of the effects of air pollution on our climate.

In the first study, the Convair 580 will fly from an airport in Cleveland, Ohio, as the researchers collect data on pollution and clouds at different altitudes over a large area around Cleveland, including Detroit (Michigan), Windsor, and Sarnia (Ontario).

In the second study, the Convair 580 will fly over the Maritime Provinces during episodes of a pollution build-up to collect data along the Maine-New Brunswick border across to the south tip of Nova Scotia, over Saint John, New Brunswick, and along the Northumberland Strait. The movement of pollution from Ontario, Quebec and the U.S. Northeast can be a major source of pollution to the Maritime Provinces.

International collaboration on air quality research is very important since air pollutants do not respect borders. In order to better understand air quality, scientists have to look at how air pollutants travel across the continent, and how their chemical composition

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changes as they move. Ultimately, this study will provide Environment Canada with a more solid scientific basis to address air pollution and its effects on human and environmental health.

More information about the ICARTT is available at  
[http://www.msc-smc.ec.gc.ca/research/icartt/index\\_e.html](http://www.msc-smc.ec.gc.ca/research/icartt/index_e.html)

**For more information, please contact:**

Denis Simard  
Environment Canada  
Tel.: (819) 994-7499  
E-mail: [denis.simard@ec.gc.ca](mailto:denis.simard@ec.gc.ca)

Manon Lechasseur  
NRC Media Relations  
Tel.: (613) 998-7352  
E-mail: [media@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca](mailto:media@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca)

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