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CIELAP's Call to Action for a Green Economy New Report Finds Room for Significant Progress and the Need for Federal Action

TORONTO – 12 April 2011 - The Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP) today releases its report *A Green Economy for Canada: Consulting with Canadians*. This CIELAP report is co-authored by Carolyn Webb and Thomas C. Esakin. Resulting from an extensive survey of government and non-governmental organizations and thought leaders from across the country, the report points to gaps in government policy and business practices that have contributed to a loss in productivity that could be achieved in embracing more sustainable practices.

Recommendations are provided in preparing for the Rio 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Earth Summit), including a call for Federal leadership in adopting principles and practices to embrace a Green Economy.

“Too often Canadians see the economy and the environment as separate and distinct – this has to change,” states Carolyn Webb, lead co-author of the report. “By linking environmental, social and economic objectives and actions, our governments and businesses can increase their competitive advantage; create jobs and increase job satisfaction and retention; realize significant cost savings; attract stable and long-term foreign investment; and earn revenues from improved ecosystems and local economic stimulation.”

CIELAP found that impressive advances are being made towards a Green Economy across the country through the use of a mix of financial mechanisms, regulation, procurement, investments in R&D and infrastructure, and education and skills training. However, the report also found that a lack of Federal government leadership is a significant barrier to process.

Among its implications, this lack of leadership is producing uncertainty and challenges for businesses. Stakeholders and governments from across Canada believe that we have much to gain by moving towards a green economy and much to lose by ignoring what is already a global transition in process. The initiatives and best practices shared by participants reveal that provincial and municipal governments, NGO and business leaders are already implementing policies and other measures in this direction.

The Report points to the following recommendations and a strong Call to Action:

1. **The Government of Canada can play a strong role by utilizing the levers it has available to realize the benefits of a Green Economy path.** This is not being done today. Such a move could provide additional benefits such as supporting the federal economic action plan, helping mature the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, providing guidance to the Finance Minister's framing of the annual budget announcements, and in establishing Canada as a leader on the international stage.
2. **Advance a strong national dialogue and development of a shared vision in advance of Rio+20.** The Federal government and provinces can help play a coordinating role and cities can be brought to the table as important players. Successful partnerships can serve as examples

including the new Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement; the Western Climate Initiative; and programs such as the Federation of Canadian Municipality (FCM)'s Partners for Climate Protection. Such a dialogue should be initiated by the Federal government, provinces in collaboration, and independent third parties.

3. **Establish clear price signals and invest in technology, R&D and green business.** The report calls for investment in R&D, innovation and technologies, particularly climate change and greenhouse gas emission technologies, to help Canada move towards a Green Economy. Technology should be promoted as an important part of a policy mix, not as a solution in and of itself. The Federal government can help provide rules of the game and price signals that guide the market towards more sustainable practices. Such game-starting rules and drivers could include a mix of regulation, penalties, incentives, research, programs, shifting subsidies, strengthening health and environmental standards, and making use of indicators.
4. **Increase federal leadership on the international stage.** The report calls out other areas that Canada can contribute to on the world stage including technology transfer, programs that place value on ecosystem goods and services, and the rigorous use of Strategic Environmental Assessment in decision-making.

It is hoped that the Report and its recommendations will be prioritized for the Canadian government in preparing for the Rio+20 Summit. Government priorities should include concrete, practical deliverables rather than grand-sounding statements. It is also hoped that the need for a national green economy policy and action plan will drive national successes. This needs to be actively debated in advance of the Federal Election.

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The executive summary and full report are available at www.cielap.org

Founded in 1970, the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP) is an independent environmental law and policy research and education organization. CIELAP's mission is to inform legislative, policy and regulatory outcomes for Sustainability at the national and provincial/territorial levels of government in Canada.