

## **The Next Decade: Potential Futures for Environmental Assessment in Canada**

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Environmental assessment in Canada has enjoyed four decades of what might generally be described as "growth and progress." It is recognized internationally as a leader in strategic environmental assessment and a pioneer of the now burgeoning field of sustainability assessment, the most advanced form of environmental assessment in the world. But long-standing concerns about the efficacy of project-based environmental impact assessment, which is the foundation of the Canadian family of impact assessment tools, combined with recent political pressure to expedite federal project reviews of natural resource projects has led to an abrupt and controversial "gutting" of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. What might the new, limited scope of federal environmental assessment mean to future of the Canadian family of environmental assessment frameworks in the next decade? Several potential pathways forward are discussed, noting some of the dramatic differences among them.

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**Presented by the Department of Geography, Planning, and Environment**