



## **Positions on Public Policy Precautionary Approach**

Industry supports the responsible application of the Rio Declaration that states: In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

### Background

The Precautionary Approach, as set out in the Rio Declaration Principle 15, is consistent with a science-based risk assessment approach to policy making. Its use in the U.S. and Canada is in the context of an existing rigorous legislative, regulatory and voluntary framework used to protect people in the environment. The Precautionary Approach can be, and is, applied when policy decisions are made within this framework.

The proper process to implementing the Precautionary Approach as a public policy tool should include the following key elements:

- Reasonable evidence that “threat of serious or irreversible damage to health or the environment” is credible objective risk assessment
- Targeted risk reduction methods
- Measures that are proportionate to risk
- Balanced, scientific and transparent peer review
- Involvement of all relevant stakeholders
- Measures that include a societal cost/benefit assessment
- Determination that measures are achieving their goals.

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