



Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment

– the national voice of physicians on the environment and health

Ontario Pesticide Ban Protects 12 Million People

CAPE wins strongest restrictions in North America

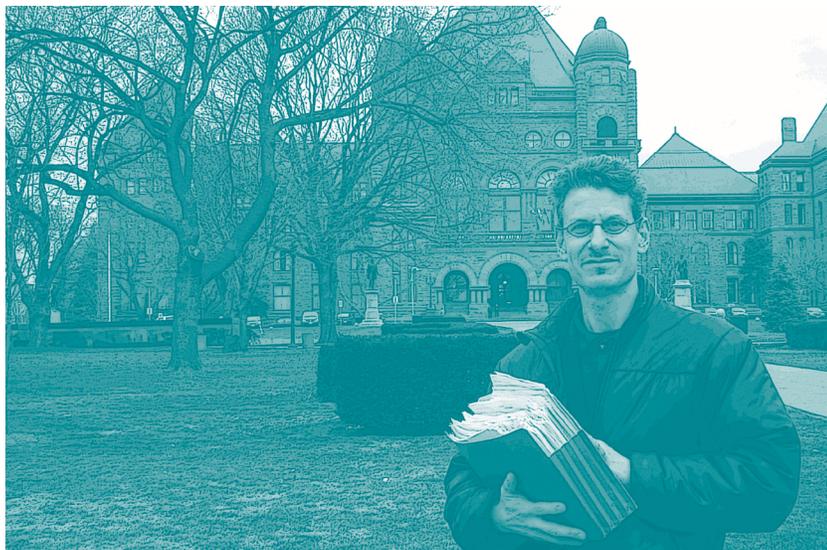
A CAPE-LED CAMPAIGN WAS VICTORIOUS THIS SUMMER WHEN THE Ontario government passed a province-wide ban on lawn and garden pesticides.

The new legislation – officially known as the *Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act, 2008* – follows the passage of bans in cities such as Toronto, London, and Markham.

When implemented in 2009, it will prohibit not only the use, but also the sale, of some 300 non-essential pesticide products. More extensive than even Quebec's strong pesticide legislation, it is being hailed as the most health-protective law of its kind in North America.

"This was a major victory for us," said CAPE Executive Director Gideon Forman. "When we began the campaign it wasn't clear the legislation would prohibit product sales. It also wasn't clear it would protect *rural* Ontarians – the initial promise covered only urban residents. In the end we won both: The sale of these poisons is prohibited right across the province."

CAPE and its partners – including the David Suzuki Foundation, Ontario College of Family Physicians, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, and the Canadian Cancer Society – pushed for a sales



CAPE Executive Director, Gideon Forman, delivers your letters to the Premier

prohibition because this is considered the surest way to stop pesticide use. "If people can't buy it, they can't use it," said Forman. "And that's how we prevent pesticide-related illness."

Realizing the importance of the legislation not only for Ontario but all other provinces, CAPE put huge muscle into the campaign. CAPE representatives met in-person with Environment Minister John Gerretsen himself on four occasions – including a face-to-face with Board member Dr. Cathy Vakil, one of Canada's leading experts on pesticides and human health – and ran pro-ban advertisements in the *Ottawa Citizen* and *Ontario Medical Review*.

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The President's Corner

I AM NOT A FAN OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S decision to go back to the polls. Granted, the election campaign is an opportunity for environmental discussion and debate, and for the announcement of new initiatives. But it is also the end to many important initiatives already underway. Everything that was in process in the last parliament stops with this election call. Everything is erased.

The Canadian Environmental Protection Act has a mandatory five-year review built into it, a review that was becoming more of a ten-year review with delays.

Both the House and Senate environmental committees had heard weeks of testimony and issued reports calling for stricter timelines for assessing pollutants, the elimination of toxic and persistent chemicals, and the burden of proof on producers, among other things. The election call, unfortunately, removes the government's duty to respond to the reports and to do anything to change the legislation.

The Harper government had also tabled C-52, a bill to overhaul the decades old Hazardous Products Act (HPA). C-52 was a first step toward better controlling

harmful substances in everyday consumer products. The bill would have helped us get past the product-by-product regulatory process that made the HPA slow and ineffective. C-52 too died with the end of parliament.

An initiative to specifically restrict phthalate softeners in consumer products was taking its own path. An NDP private member's bill launched by environment critic, Nathan Cullen, had made it through the House and had (miraculously) reached the Senate. The government

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Cindy Tuer, Coalition for a Healthy Calgary

Calgary Pesticide Bylaw UPDATE!

by Cindy Tuer

JULY 15, 2008 WAS TRULY A RED LETTER DATE IN THE FIGHT against unnecessary pesticide use in the city of Calgary. In the final lead-up to the vote at council to proceed with drawing up a pesticide bylaw, many diverse individuals and organizations across the city and across the country came on board to help put pressure on council via postcards, e-mails and phone calls.

Along with CAPE, Clean Calgary, the David Suzuki Foundation, Canadian Cancer Society (Alberta/Northwest Territories Div.), Sierra Club, churches and an art collective joined the Coalition for a Healthy Calgary to achieve success!

City administration is preparing a community stakeholders consultation format which will meet to hammer out a bylaw for consideration by City Council. This process, which will involve interested groups and businesses, will involve the Coalition and lawn care companies among others. So the situation in Calgary is generally looking good with two more formal steps to pass through before a bylaw is reality! The final vote should come to City Council in the fall of 2009.

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had supported an amended version of the bill, which would keep the phthalate, DEHP, out of young children's toys and out of cosmetics. Cullen's bill was closer to being a law than most private members bills get, but it too was lost due to the election call.

The next government can reincarnate any of these projects. I hope they do and CAPE will be one of the voices reminding them of the importance of this work. But their continuation is far from guaranteed, and for some, like the phthalates bill, they would still have to start again from the beginning.

Dr. Kapil Khatter, CAPE President

Liberal Leader Seeks CAPE's Advice Board of Directors get private audience with Mr. Dion

by Farrab Khan

ON AUGUST 19TH 2008 FEDERAL LIBERAL LEADER STÉPHANE DION HELD A CONFERENCE CALL with CAPE board members to discuss the party's new carbon tax proposal – the Green Shift – and to hear what issues Canadian doctors see as pertinent to protecting the environment.

Organized and attended by Liberal MP Dr. Carolyn Bennett, the discussion included questions ranging from the carbon tax to local food procurement and Canada's toxic tar sands.

The Chair of CAPE's board, Dr. John Howard, began the conversation by expressing the need to maintain a healthy Canada – with a healthy environment and healthy citizens. As a physician, Dr. Howard sees the inextricable link between human health and the environment and feels it would make sense to tax heavy polluters and use those same tax dollars to boost the health care system.

CAPE board member, Dr. Art Wiebe, a rural physician and organic farmer, inquired whether the Liberal party would promote local, sustainable foods. Fellow board member and pediatrician Dr. Hilary De Veber was concerned about higher rates of smog-related illness and wondered if the Liberals had a smog-reduction strategy in the works. Mr. Dion explained that the aim of the Green Shift strategy was to reduce overall carbon emissions, making the air we breathe cleaner. As for plans to implement a local food procurement strategy, he said Canadians would have to wait until the full platform was released.

In this direct dialogue with Stéphane Dion, CAPE doctors were able to voice their concerns. We hope this conversation – as well as a dialogue with other political leaders – will continue in the months and years to come as CAPE continues its vital advocacy for human health and environmental protection.



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The organization also made a presentation to the Standing Committee examining the legislation and presented the Premier with 1,500 letters from CAPE members.

"I think our members' letters were vitally important," said CAPE President, Dr. Kapil Khatter. "The Premier simply couldn't ignore this level of concern from doctors. I very much appreciate the time our members took to write."

The legislation is not perfect – it allows pesticides on golf courses and prevents municipalities from passing bylaws that are more stringent than the provincial ban – but many are still hailing it as a signature achievement, one that will spur action right across Canada.

"This is what CAPE is about," said Dr. Khatter. "With our members' wonderful support, we go out and protect planetary health in a real, tangible way. At the end of the day we have to ask, 'What did we actually achieve?' In this case it was safeguarding 12 million people."



CAPE young leader, Sonia Murray

Young Leaders bring Enviro Issues to Med Schools

by Sonia Murray

IN THE SUMMER OF 2008 EIGHT MEDICAL STUDENTS FROM ACROSS Canada joined CAPE as young leaders. Our goals are to increase awareness about environmental issues at medical schools, educate students on making more sustainable choices and reduce the environmental impact of the health care sector.

We are planning to organize Earth Day celebrations at each of our universities, increase the amount of information on links between environment and health in the medical curriculum and evaluate the ecological footprint of the average medical student and of local hospitals. We also hope to collaborate with local physicians both in projects we initiate and in ongoing CAPE activities.

Each of the young leaders is involved in local environmental activism. *Samantha Green*, from the University of Ottawa, is a member of the Sierra Youth Coalition and aims to use her medical expertise to advocate for better environmental legislation. *Andrea Kreitz*, from the University of Alberta, completed her undergraduate degree in Environmental Chemistry and is concerned about the effects of environmental degradation on health. *Willem van Heiningen* from McMaster University developed a sense of concern from his family who practiced organic agriculture. He currently volunteers with occupational health clinics, providing medical support for farm workers suffering from pesticide exposure. *Ian Sudbury* from the University of Calgary is assembling a team of students and faculty members to address the areas where the Faculty of Medicine and local Calgary hospitals can decrease their ecological footprint. *Sonia Murray* from the University of British Columbia enjoys biking and promotes biking as a healthy and sustainable mode of transportation. She is also involved in a project to increase the amount of environmental education in the medical curriculum.

We recognize that health and environmental issues are closely linked and that as medical students and physicians we have a responsibility to initiate positive change in our schools and communities. If you wish to contact a young leader in your area please email Sonia Murray at murrays@interchange.ubc.ca.

Fan Mail: Your Letters to CAPE

EACH WEEK, CAPE RECEIVES LETTERS FROM SUPPORTERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, PRAISING the work that doctors do to protect the environment. Here is a sampling of what we've heard from you. Please keep your letters coming – your support is much appreciated!

“Many thanks to you and the other doctors in the Association who have taken action to do what you can to help solve the serious problem of chemical pollution. Your energy and educational efforts are much appreciated as an important first step.”

- Brent Tremblay, Burlington ON

“Thank you for your essential work... Please continue to work hard so that PM Harper may finally get the message – the health of Canadians is more important than Monsanto's profits!”

- Candace Moore, Duncan BC

“Thank you so much for all your hard work in the [pesticide] ban for Ontario (and all the municipalities)... CAPE is the most worthwhile membership I belong to by far, thanks so much for all your work.”

- Dr. Trish Van Boekel, Stratford ON

“As an old public health nurse, I'm pleased someone is working on prevention. Best wishes for continued success.”

- E. F., Winnipeg MB

“I strongly believe in your work. Thank you so much.”

- P.B., Regina SK

“Thank you for all your hard work to protect Canadians. This spring, I look forward to smelling the air and not what was sprayed on my neighbours lawn.”

- N.M., Etobicoke ON



photo: Veronique Lehouck

Lawn & Garden Pesticides: Reducing Harm

Now Available! This unique 10 minute DVD sets out the scientific evidence linking common household pesticides to a variety of serious illnesses. It offers information from the Ontario College of Family Physicians' ground-breaking pesticide study and sets out safe lawncare alternatives. **Excellent for showing at public meetings or for educating local politicians.** To order your copy, please contact: Farrah Khan, Executive Assistant, at : farrah@cape.ca

NOW You Can Donate On-line at www.cape.ca

Now it's easier than ever to support CAPE's vital environmental work. Go to www.cape.ca and hit the "Donate Now" button on our home page. Your gift will go to CAPE's charitable wing, assisting our crucial education and research activities. You can make the gift in honour or memory of a friend or family member. And you'll receive an instant tax receipt!

I would like to join CAPE in working for a healthier environment

Last Name/First Name _____

Dr Ms. Mr. Miss Mrs. Other _____

Address _____

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Membership

- Members \$100
- Supporters (*Free DVD on Lawn Pesticides*) \$200
- Students, retirees, those with limited income \$25
- Member Organizations \$50
- Executive Membership \$1000

(My cheque is made out to the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment)

- I would like updates on CAPE-related activities. Please put me on the CAPENEWS listserve (*for members only*).
- I want to get involved in CAPE.

Donations

I am sending a donation of:

- \$50 \$100 \$500 \$1000 Other _____ to support CAPE's environmental advocacy work (*My cheque is made out to the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment*).

VISA MASTERCARD
Card # _____ Expiry Date _____

- Please take a donation of \$ _____ from my account each month. (*I have attached a voided cheque and signed below*)

Signature _____

- I would like a charitable tax receipt for my donation. I understand that these donations will only be used for research and education activities. (*My cheque is made out to the Canadian Health and Environment Education and Research Foundation (CHEER)*)

- Check here if you do not want your name shared with other like-minded organizations.

Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment

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ECO Friends This feature section contains a brief synopsis of a group that shares CAPE's basic perspectives.

Climate Action Network

Climate Action Network is an umbrella organization for several Canadian environmental groups – including CAPE – that take action on climate change. Working at provincial, federal and international levels, CAN focuses on influencing policy change by responding to current events, organizing press conferences and lobbying the government. CAN also publishes a weekly e-bulletin called Climate Action News to inform its members of pertinent issues and events relating to climate change in Canada and around the world.

For more information, please visit the Climate Action Network website at www.climateactionnetwork.ca.



We're growing!
Since 2006 CAPE has grown
from 450 to 3,500 members.

