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# Suzuki and Senate face off

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## David Suzuki (QMI AGENCY PHOTO)

OTTAWA - Conservative senators who question foreign funding for environmental activists have a fight on their hands — launched by the same group that tried to raise cash over Christmas to "Save Santa" as global warming melts the North Pole.

The David Suzuki Foundation, which has received hundreds of thousands of dollars from American foundations, has launched an online form letter campaign to "tell the Senate to stop silencing environmental groups."

"It's also within our interest to make sure that Canadians are informed about the fact that there's inaccuracies that are being said within the Senate and that we see this as being fairly undemocratic in the way it's being approached," foundation spokeswoman Leanne Clare said.

The group hopes to send 5,000 form letters to Tory Sen. Nicole Eaton and others denouncing a Senate debate about the hundreds of millions of dollars American foundations have poured into Canadian environmental organizations — mostly to oppose the oilsands.

Eaton says the letters she's received from the Suzuki campaign don't impress her.

"They belittle the value of the Senate debate and resort to name-calling and insults," she said in an e-mail.

She also said the debate she launched is a legitimate inquiry.

"It is about the interference of foreign foundations in Canada's domestic affairs and their abuse of Canada's existing Revenue Canada charitable status," Eaton said. "And it is about masking political activities and lobbying behind the words 'charity' and 'foundation.'"

That worries the Suzuki Foundation.

"If they try and tighten these rules, it's not just environmental organizations that are going to be affected by this," Clare said.

Meantime, Eaton accuses the Suzuki Foundation of using its campaign to fundraise, something Clare denies.

"We have an opportunity for people to donate on our website every single day," Clare said.

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