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Attention News Editors:

Groups praise Ontario for remaining firm - Doctors, Citizens Blast NAFTA over Pesticide Ban

OTTAWA, Nov. 6 /CNW Telbec/ - The Council of Canadians and the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) today condemned NAFTA for letting chemical giant Dow sue Canada over a Quebec pesticide ban.

"Citizens in every corner of the country are outraged that a U.S.-based transnational firm would attack Quebec's environmental laws," says Council of Canadians board member and trade expert, Steven Shrybman.

CAPE Executive Director, Gideon Forman, says pesticide bans such as Quebec's reduce the use of lawn chemicals significantly and protect people from serious illness. "Exposure to some of these poisons puts a person at risk for cancer and neurological disease," says Forman. "But Quebec's ban helped cut pesticide use by 50% - a far greater reduction than anywhere else in Canada."

The Council of Canadians is calling on Ottawa to renegotiate NAFTA with the Obama Administration so the deal forbids companies from suing governments. "The current NAFTA formulation is wholly unacceptable," says Shrybman. "It puts corporate profit ahead of human and environmental health."

Forman praised the Ontario Government - which is putting finishing touches on pesticide restrictions of its own - for not backing down. "There's huge pressure on Premier McGuinty to drop his prohibition on lawn pesticides. But to his credit, he's going ahead with a ban."

On Monday, CAPE will be delivering to Parliament the first 10,000 petitions collected as part of its "Petition on Pesticides" campaign. The initiative calls for a ban on toxic lawn chemicals right across the country.

For further information: Dylan Penner, Media Officer, The Council of Canadians, (613) 795-8685; Gideon Forman, Executive Director, CAPE, (416) 306-2273

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