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**Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment**  
– the National Voice of Physicians on the Environment and Health

# CAPE Energy Project Raises Alarm about Coal

## *Partial plant closure like taking 2 million cars off road*

IN AN EFFORT TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT smog and climate change, CAPE launched the Doctors' Renewable Energy Project (DREP) in March, 2010. Not even a year old now, the initiative is already enjoying success.

DREP brings together health professionals in a campaign to educate Canadians about renewable energy and coal-fired power plants. Partners include the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, the Lung Association, Ontario College of Family Physicians, and the Asthma Society of Canada. Led by CAPE, the groups have brought the latest science on coal and wind's health effects to newspaper editors, medical conferences, and the general public.

"It's marvelous working with these health organizations," says CAPE executive director Gideon Forman. "We all want clean air so an awareness campaign on coal is an obvious choice."

DREP focuses specifically on coal facilities in Ontario. These plants release neurotoxins such as mercury and lead, carcinogens such as arsenic, and acid-rain components such as sulphur dioxide. At their peak, they emitted the greenhouse gas equivalent of nearly seven million cars.



CAPE board members, Dr. Hilary de Veber (left) and Dr. Cathy Vakil (right), with Ontario Environment Minister, John Wilkinson

Ontario has promised to stop coal use by 2014, but CAPE thinks the end could come in 2011 – saving nearly 1,000 lives and preventing hundreds of thousands of asthma attacks.

CAPE received good news in October, 2010 when the province announced it was closing a portion of two coal facilities – the equivalent of taking up to 2 million automobiles off the road.

*...continues on page 2*



**Enclosed:  
Your official  
"Petition on Pesticides"**

**Help Canada's  
doctors ban  
chemicals that make  
our kids sick...**

**CAPE has delivered over 11,500 of your petitions to Prime Minister Harper, urging him to ban the use and sale of cosmetic pesticides across Canada. Many cities and provinces now restrict pesticide use, but millions of Canadians are still not protected from these toxic chemicals.**

**Thank you for participating in this important campaign and keep the petitions coming!**

# CAPE Goes to the Tar Sands: An Eyewitness Account

By Farrah Khan

IN OCTOBER 2010, I TRAVELED TO THE ALBERTA tar sands to visit the source of Canada's dirty oil – an operation that has earned international disapproval for its green house gas emissions, destruction of natural habitat, water contamination, and more.

Prior to my visit, I had read newspaper articles and environmental reports explaining the devastation. I'd seen photographs and heard personal accounts of the oil sites and neighbouring communities impacted from their toxic emissions. I thought I had a pretty good idea of the extent of damage. I was wrong.

The destruction is far greater than I had imagined and the experience is more than visual, it's visceral. The polluted air is so thick, you can taste it, and looking down the horizon you see smoke stack after smoke stack after open-pit mine, where lush boreal forest once existed.

In addition to the obvious environmental catastrophe, the tar sands' impact on human health is beginning to cause a stir. A recent study by Dr. David Schindler shows the "oil sands industry releases the 13 elements considered priority pollutants (PPE) under the US Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water Act, via air and



Syncrude tar sands site

water, to the Athabasca River and its watershed." The Athabasca River provides drinking water to down-stream communities in Ft. Chipewyan and up to the Northwest Territories. This contamination is refuted by the oil industry, but when rare cancers begin to cluster in these regions (as was first reported by Dr. John O'Connor 4 years ago) and the fish in the river are becoming too toxic to eat, how long will they continue to deny the impact?

I came away from this experience knowing that even though the complexities of shutting down the tar sands are many, this operation must stop. We need to wean ourselves off the oil dependence we've developed over the last century and switch to safer energy alternatives. This won't happen overnight and it will require the involvement of government, industry, and individuals to make better decisions. If we continue on this path of destruction – adding to climate change and its health impacts – we won't be around long enough to regret our poor judgment.

## Fan Mail Your Letters to CAPE

EACH WEEK, CAPE RECEIVES LETTERS FROM SUPPORTERS ACROSS the country, praising the work our 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!

“It's a lot easier to prevent harm than to clean up toxic sites afterwards. Thank you for all you do to keep our world clean and free from poisons.”

– Nancy Wigen, Salt Spring Island, BC

“The latest newsletter, 'Energy and Your Health,' is exceptionally poignant and well presented...Keep up the great work, for there is no greater work in our time.”

– Dr. Jim Hollingworth, Goderich, ON



Photo: Veronique Lehoucq

### 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: farrah@cape.ca

CAPE Energy Project continued from page 1

“We attended the ceremony when the government announced its partial coal shut-down. It was a great first step,” says Forman. “But we reminded everyone that Ontario has enough power to keep the lights on without coal.”

DREP also raises awareness about the health effects of renewable energy sources, including solar and wind power.

“The province's coal plants contribute to over 120,000 illnesses,” says Forman. “The harm done by coal is orders of magnitude greater than the harm done by renewable energy.”



## ECO-LEADERS' CORNER

*Eco-Leaders' Corner* is a column that features news for, about, and from CAPE Eco-Leaders.

WHAT A FANTASTIC YEAR CAPE HAS HAD! Forty-five individuals or groups have now stepped up to become Eco-Leaders. Launched in January 2009, Eco-Leaders support the long term vision of CAPE with gifts of \$1,000 or more.

If you'd like to become an Eco-Leader, give a gift of stock, or make a donation in someone's honour, please call Farrah Khan, Executive Assistant, collect at (416) 306 2273.



CAPE Eco-Leader, Cindy Tuer

## Why I Became an Eco-Leader

by Cindy Tuer

YEARS AGO WHEN I FIRST DISCOVERED CAPE and what they had accomplished with their big cred and small budget, I became a huge fan. It's refreshing to see an organization which marries health and the environment in such a perfect way. They understand the connection between reducing toxins to improve our health and quality of life.

Over the years, I have watched CAPE champion pesticide bans across the country and with their assistance, I am sure that they will help our local health and environmental organizations achieve the same for our city of Calgary.

As a new grandmother, the issue of indiscriminate pesticide use in our city has acquired even greater urgency!

THIS SUMMER, CAPE WAS HONOURED TO RECEIVE ONTARIO NATURE'S J. R. DYMOND PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD for leading a successful campaign to ban the use of lawn and garden pesticides across Ontario. Thanks to support from members like you, we were able to secure the most health-protective pesticide legislation in North America and win an award from one of Canada's most respected conservation groups!

## Ontario Pesticide Ban a Success Story!

ONTARIO'S BAN ON LAWN AND GARDEN PESTICIDES – THE MOST - health protective legislation of its kind in North America – is working!

Research released by Ontario's Ministry of the Environment compared pesticide concentrations in urban streams in 2008 (a year before the ban took effect) with those in 2009. The Ministry had 168 water samples collected and sent them to an independent laboratory for analysis.

The results? Following the ban, concentrations of some common lawn herbicides dropped dramatically: 2,4-D was down by 86%, dicamba by 82%, and MCPP by 78%.

"Ontarians still have beautiful properties but they're maintaining them without toxic chemicals," says CAPE Chair, Dr. John Howard. "And that's exactly what we hoped for when we launched our pesticide ban campaign."

CAPE doctors are now building on their success with a call to the government of British Columbia to follow Ontario's example and enact province-wide legislation prohibiting lawn pesticides' use and sale.

The following very generous people donated \$1,000 or more to CAPE's Eco-Leaders circle of support.

### THANK YOU SO MUCH TO EACH ONE!

- Mrs. Winifrede Burry • Dr. Scott Daley • Dr. Richard Denton
- Dr. Bradley J. Dibble • Dr. Raquel Feroe • Dr. Scott Findlay • Dr. Leigh Fraser-Roberts • Dr. Lee Ann Gallant • Dr. Libuse Gilka • Dr. Margaret Gliński-Oomen • Dr. Chris Hildebrand • Dr. Jim Hollingworth • Dr. John Howard and Dr. Nicole le Riche • Dr. Cortlandt MacKenzie • Mr. & Mrs. Ray and Anne Morris • Dr. Sarah Newbery and Dr. Eliseo Orantia • Dr. Eric Notebaert • Dr. Carole O'Beirne • Dr. Catherine Painvin • Dr. David Rainham
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- Dr. Donna Sutherland • Dr. Tomislav Svoboda • Dr. Michelle Tan
- Mrs. Cindy Tuer • Dr. Trish Van Boekel and Mr. Dave Sheldon
- Dr. Georgina Wilcock • Mrs. Helen Zinkargue
- ... and eight anonymous donors.

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



## The Asthma Society of Canada (ASC)

CAPE HAS RECENTLY PARTNERED WITH THE ASTHMA SOCIETY OF Canada (ASC) to raise awareness about coal-fired power stations. Coal-burning contributes to smog, which affects the respiratory health of all Canadians, making this issue a natural fit for the ASC.

The ASC is a national, charitable, volunteer-supported organization solely devoted to enhancing the quality of life and health for people living with asthma and associated allergies. The ASC offers evidence-based and age-appropriate asthma and allergy education and disease management programs. The ASC's vision is to empower every child and adult with asthma in Canada to live an active and symptom-free life. Their mission is to be a balanced voice for asthma in Canada, advancing optimal self-management, prevention, research and health care.

The ASC provides its services directly to people with asthma through websites ([www.asthma.ca](http://www.asthma.ca) and [www.asthmakids.ca](http://www.asthmakids.ca)) as well as email ([info@asthma.ca](mailto:info@asthma.ca)) and the toll-free Asthma Info Line, 1-866-787-4050, which is staffed by Certified Asthma/Respiratory Educators.

**CAPE  
ACKNOWLEDGES,  
WITH GRATITUDE,  
THE GENEROSITY  
OF OUR FUNDERS:**



Alterna Savings  
Canadian Auto Workers  
Canadian Cancer Society  
Canadian Health & Environment Education & Research Foundation (CHEER)

Ontario College of Family Physicians  
Pilkington-Henniger Charitable Trust

Over 4,900 individual CAPE members

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**WE'RE GROWING!**  
Since 2006 CAPE has grown from 450 to over 4,900 members.

*I would like to support CAPE for a healthier environment!*

Last Name/First Name .....  Dr.  Ms.  Mr.  Miss  Mrs.  Other .....

Address ..... City ..... Province ..... Postal Code .....

Telephone ..... Email .....

**DONATIONS** Single Gifts  \$50  \$100  \$500  \$1000 (this makes you an Eco-Leader!)  Other \$ .....

Monthly Gifts  \$5  \$15  \$30  \$85 (this makes you an Eco-Leader!)  Other \$ ..... per month

My cheque is made out to the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE), or marked "VOID" for monthly donations.

VISA  MASTERCARD Card # ..... Expiry Date ..... Signature .....

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

**CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

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