



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

CAPE Asbestos Campaign A Success!

Canada to pull out of deadly asbestos industry

by Laura Anonen

CAPE IS LAUDING THE RECENT DECISION OF THE Quebec and Federal Governments to ban the mining and exporting of asbestos, a mineral known to cause diseases such as lung cancer, asbestosis and mesothelioma.

Health risks associated with asbestos are widely known and it has been removed from older buildings across the country, including Parliament Hill. Yet the Jeffrey Mine in the town of Asbestos, Quebec was still exporting this deadly mineral to developing countries.

Québec Premier Pauline Marois' party stated during the provincial election that they would cancel the promised subsidy to the Jeffrey Mine that former Quebec Premier Jean Charest had made. The \$58 million loan to keep the mine alive received support from the Federal Government, a decision contrary to that made by other developed nations. Current board member and past founding president, Dr. Warren Bell, wrote,

"IF THERE EVER WAS AN INDICATION OF A COMPLETE AND UTTER DISRESPECT FOR SCIENCE ON THE PART OF OUR SENIOR ELECTED OFFICIALS, THIS IS IT."

But now Ottawa has reversed its decision. Even more, the Federal Government stated that it will no longer block efforts to include chrysotile asbestos in the Rotterdam Convention – the UN treaty that places restrictions on hazardous chemicals. This is a momentous decision from our Government, and CAPE's doctors will work hard to make sure this promise is kept.

CAPE has been actively campaigning for an asbestos ban and we would like to thank all of you for your support on this issue. We have sent many petitions from our members urging the Government to ban the mining and exporting of asbestos. We also commissioned opinion polling in Quebec and purchased a full-page ad in *le Devoir*.

We did not accomplish this alone and would like to send our thanks to the many activists and organizations who have been pressuring the government on this issue for many years. CAPE board member Dr. Éric Notebaert and human rights activist Kathleen Ruff deserve much credit as they have been tireless in their work opposing the asbestos industry.

This is another campaign success we are very proud of. We will continue to work to ensure the mining and export of asbestos ends immediately with a just transition for workers.

Dr Bolduc, 76 % des Québécois disent NON au financement de la mine d'amiante Jeffrey d'Asbestos.

En tant que ministre de la Santé et médecin, vous avez le devoir de protéger la santé publique.

Dites à Jean Charest que le financement de la mine Jeffrey est inacceptable et immoral.

Le consensus médical est clair : « l'utilisation sécuritaire » de l'amiante est impossible. Seul le lobby de l'amiante chrysotile prétend le contraire, un point de vue qui n'est appuyé par aucune organisation médicale réputée. L'utilisation de toute forme d'amiante doit être interdite.

Le lobby de l'amiante fait de la désinformation. Votre devoir médical et votre responsabilité ministérielle vous obligent à dénoncer le mensonge parce qu'il met en danger la santé et la vie des gens.

ON COMPTE SUR VOUS !

"Arrêtez d'exporter la mort fabriquée au Québec"

DITES NON AU FINANCEMENT PAR VOTRE GOUVERNEMENT DE LA MINE D'AMIANTE JEFFREY.



CAPE Eco-Leader, Dr. Ian Simpson

Why I Became an Eco-Leader

by Dr. Ian Simpson

I WAS AWARE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH issues early in my life, as my father's family was a coal mining family. I knew about mine disasters, broken limbs, coal miners' lung disease and TB. Throughout my years as a physician working in London (UK) and Newfoundland, I have encountered many more health issues related to the way we treat our environment.

My life story tells me that we must be on our alert; and recent studies and research tell me that some – perhaps many – of the 50-60,000 chemicals introduced into our environment since WW2 are causing some of our most intractable illnesses.

Since the Ontario College of Family Physicians research paper reviewing the literature on the relationship between pesticides and human health, I have become active with a Coalition group in trying to get a ban on cosmetic pesticides in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I became an Eco-Leader after seeing how much help CAPE was for our coalition. Finally after several years of writing to newspapers, and to Ministers of Health, and Ministers of the Environment, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has banned the sale and use of five harmful cosmetic pesticides in municipal and residential areas.

CAPE brings the voice of the health community to the decision-making table and we've learned that when doctors speak-up, politicians listen. Physicians should be involved in educating firstly ourselves, then our patients and communities, and we should be prepared to be advocates for public health. This is why I support CAPE's work and am proud to be an Eco-Leader.



ECO-LEADERS' CORNER

CAPE'S ECO-LEADERS SUPPORT THE LONG-TERM VISION OF CAPE with gifts of \$5,000 (Gold), \$2,500 (Silver) or \$1,000 (Bronze).

If you'd like to become an Eco-Leader, give a gift of stock, or name CAPE in your will, please contact our Fundraising Director, Josh Bowman at josh@cape.ca.



The following very generous people donated to CAPE's ECO-LEADERS CIRCLE OF SUPPORT.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

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CAPE's Executive Director Goes Back to School

by Gideon Forman

AS PART OF CAPE'S EFFORT TO RUN STRONGER campaigns, this past summer and fall the Board granted me a sabbatical to pursue a Certificate in Renewable Energy at the University of Toronto. It was an extraordinary opportunity and showed the organization is not only a great environmental advocate but also a top-notch employer, one that develops and nurtures staff. The Board felt a study leave would enhance my knowledge of energy issues – a key area of our work – and make us more effective in our effort to phase-out coal and promote safe alternatives. More than 20 years after finishing graduate school – and 8 years after starting at CAPE – I was once again a student!

Topics covered in my program included solar power, carbon finance, and biofuels. The courses were excellent in illustrating just how complex energy issues can be.

I also did research on converting coal facilities to burn wood-pellets. I discovered that as long as the wood is sustainably harvested, the forests' health can be preserved. My studies gave me new arguments for our campaign to prohibit the world's most climate-destructive fuel.

I return to CAPE offering warmest thanks to the Board and my colleague Farrah Khan – who wonderfully led the organization in my absence – and with a renewed passion for planetary protection. I look forward to working with you on our upcoming campaigns.



CAPE President and Eco-Leader, Dr. Jean Zigby

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

WORKING IN AN ORGANIZATION LIKE CAPE SOMETIMES MAKES ONE believe healthy change can only come from “below”. With disheartening projects emanating from federal and provincial levels, such as the now infamous Omnibus Bill, one is tempted to ignore higher politics as incorrigible. I felt confirmed in that position as the tragedy-addicted media excitedly displayed the violence of the Quebec election night. So I missed the almost silent mobilization of social and environmental activists onto the political scene of Quebec.

Only in the weeks that followed did the news of the some unexpected winners of the last election begin to make it to my attention. As the names of familiar partners on environmental health issues made it to my attention as new MNAs in Quebec (some with the victorious Parti Quebecois), I was humbled. “Below” had just climbed up the ladder while I wasn't looking.

As our members remind us, CAPE rarely works alone, and has had its major influence through combined initiatives with partners such as the Canadian Cancer Society, Physicians for Global Survival, the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, and so many others. Yet, it always took a willing ear in government or public health to make the necessary changes in legislation for issues such as cosmetic pesticides. Inevitably, advocacy for human health and the environment depends on the willingness to enter into the race for leadership when it is precisely leadership that is wanting.

The proof? Within two weeks of the Quebec election, the shift of power began to be felt with two bold announcements: the aged *Gentilly 2* nuclear power station at Bécancour will be decommissioned ending nuclear power generation in Quebec, and Ottawa would no longer block the addition of asbestos to the list of hazardous substances included within the Rotterdam Convention, naming the PQ's promise to end asbestos exports as the most important reason. Even if both elements were part of the PQ's platform, it is heartening to see the party's position maintained even after winning the election. Both issues that CAPE and its partners have worked on for years.

Thanks to the determined individuals who entered the political race, and those who voted for them, “below” has a renewed chance to work from “above”. Minority governments like that presently in Quebec may not last long, but we at CAPE may finally begin to imagine breaking new ground in a post-nuclear, post-asbestos Quebec.



**Toxic lawn chemicals threaten our kids.
That's why health and environment
authorities want them banned.**

Jean Zigby, MD, CAPE President

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CAPE VICTORIES *Thanks to you!*

By supporting CAPE's work, you have helped our doctors win real environmental and health protection across the country. Here are a few examples of what you've helped us achieve:

- 2008** Ontario pesticide ban
- 2009** New Brunswick pesticide ban
- 2010** Permanent closure of 4 Ontario coal-fired units
- 2010** Nova Scotia pesticide ban
- 2011** Newfoundland and Labrador pesticide ban
- 2011** Permanent closure of 2 Ontario coal-fired units
- 2012** Closure of Ontario's Atikokan coal-plant (for conversion to biomass)
- 2012** Quebec and Federal Governments announce asbestos ban

CAPE
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