



## MEDIA RELEASE

**TORONTO (September 2, 2016)** – The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (**CAPE**) has learned [from an article](#) in today's Globe and Mail that the Federal Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) has been negotiating with Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia for the phase-out of coal plants in those provinces by 2030.

"We applaud the federal government for moving to phase-out coal plants more quickly across the country" declared **Kim Perrotta**, Executive Director of CAPE. "A national accelerated coal phase-out would have massive climate change benefits for Canada and significant health benefits for Canadians exposed to air pollution and mercury from those plants".

"The prestigious medical journal, *The Lancet*, has declared climate change to be the greatest public health challenge of our generation" said **Dr. Courtney Howard**, emergency room physician from Yellowknife and CAPE Board Member. "Last week, Nobel Peace Prize winner, Dr. James Orbinski, told Canadian doctors at the Canadian Medical Association annual meeting that climate-change driven drought killed 500,000 people in the Horn of Africa in 2011. This is an emergency that cries for action."

Coal-fired power plants have significant impacts on air quality and human health. They release large volumes of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and fine particulate matter; air pollutants that have been clearly linked to heart and lung diseases, asthma symptoms, respiratory infections, hospital admissions and premature deaths. In 2014, 12 of the top 25 emitters of sulphur dioxide in Canada were coal plants; five in Alberta, three in Saskatchewan, three in Nova Scotia, and one in New Brunswick. The Canadian Medical Association has, in fact, passed a motion supporting an even more aggressive ten year coal phase out, with the last plant closing in 2026, due to their significant public health effects.

"The federal government's actions demonstrate that it cares about the health of children, the elderly, and the infirm who are exposed to coal plant air pollution in their regions" offered **Dr. Joe Vipond**, emergency room physician in Calgary and CAPE member. "The rest of Canada will now enjoy the same public health benefits from an accelerated coal phase-out as Albertans."

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### Key facts:

- Globally, coal-fired power plants were responsible for 29% of GHG from all human-related activities.
- The closure of these plants worldwide is seen by many as the fastest way to dramatically reduce GHG on a global basis.
- There are 14 coal-fired power plants left in Canada; six in Alberta, three in Saskatchewan, four in Nova Scotia and one in New Brunswick. Collectively, they are responsible for 8.5% of Canada's greenhouse gases.
- Twelve are among the country's 25 highest emitters of sulphur dioxide and two are the country's highest emitters of mercury.