



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

130 Spadina Avenue, Suite 301  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M5V 2L4

July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## Open Letter to the Honourable Kevin Falcon - BC Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance

RE: Request for written submissions on the revenue-neutral carbon tax [News Release: 2012FIN0035-000946](#)

I'm writing to you now to provide you with feedback from our organization regarding the carbon tax in BC.

In 2007, BC set out on a courageous and innovative political course by introducing the first carbon tax in North America. Despite significant opposition from a variety of sectors, BC persisted in this course and continues along this same path today.

Despite the fact that other jurisdictions in Canada and the United States have not yet followed BC's lead, and that the economy took a downturn and is only now in recovery, we believe that it is critically important for BC to stay the course and **augment the scope of the carbon tax**.

It has now been incontrovertibly demonstrated that there is a direct link between the ecosystem and the health of its human inhabitants. Environmental contaminants such as air pollution have been conclusively linked to pathological outcomes, including cancer, birth defects, respiratory and cardiovascular illness, gastrointestinal ailments and death. Global climate change not only produces negative health effects; it also results in extreme and unpredictable weather events the damage infrastructure, at times causing injuries and death. The cumulative negative impact on human health results in an increased demand for health care services. In November 2009, leading Canadian health care organizations issued a "Joint Position Statement" (Appendix A), that called upon government and policy-makers at all levels to "...understand and address links between health and environment and to incorporate these links into policy decisions through legislative and budgetary actions."

In the past we have seen support for taking action on climate change from health professionals such as Dr Cordell Neudorf, Chief Medical Health Officer, Saskatoon Health Region (Appendix B) and Dr. Gerry Predy, Senior Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Health Services (Appendix C). I wish to affirm, on behalf of CAPE, that such support continues to this day, and if anything is actually stronger than in the past.

BC's creation of a green economy and leadership in energy conservation and environmental sustainability is being recognized on the global stage. The July 4<sup>th</sup> 2012 New York Times article "The Most Sensible Tax of All" urges the United States to "...jump at the chance to adopt a similar revenue-neutral tax..." (Appendix D). As recognition of the need for measures like BC's carbon tax becomes more widespread, maintaining and even expanding the scope of this progressive initiative becomes ever more critical.

A carbon tax is vital tool to facilitate a shift to a greener, more sustainable future. CAPE strongly encourages BC to maintain its leadership role and **expand the carbon tax**. We believe this will help improve the health of citizens in this province, and of all Canadians, and ultimately of people everywhere.

Sincerely,

Dr. Warren Bell - Salmon Arm, BC  
Past Founding President & Current Board Member, CAPE

cc: Honourable Terry Lake - BC Minister of Environment  
Dr Perry Kendal - BC Provincial Health Officer  
Canadian Medical Association