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October 9, 2018

Dear Chair & Clerk:

**Re: Bill 4, Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, 2018**

I am writing on behalf of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (**CAPE**) to express our organization's concern about the government's proposal to repeal the *Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act*, 2016.

CAPE is a non-profit organization that is funded primarily by thousands of donor/members. Founded 25 years ago, CAPE is directed by a Board currently composed of 10 physicians and one lawyer. Our mission is to improve human health by protecting the planet. **For several years, CAPE has focused its attention on climate change because we agree with the World Health Organization that climate change is the greatest public health threat of this century.**

We just experienced a blistering hot summer in Ontario and all around the world - one of the hottest four summers in recorded history, a trend attributed by [experts](#) to climate change. Over the last four months, the temperature at Toronto's International airport exceeded 28 degrees C on more than 40 days. In Quebec, the only province in Canada that tracks heat-related deaths in real time, July's heat wave claimed the lives of [over 90 people in only one week](#).

Wildfires, fuelled by [climate-driven droughts](#) and heat, threatened the lives, health, livelihood and wellbeing of millions of Canadians this summer. Ontario had [1312 wildfires this year](#); up from a 10-year average of 716. These fires were fought by about 1000 firefighters, forced evacuations on [thousands](#) of people in several northern communities, and exposed tens of thousands of residents to elevated levels of toxic [air pollution](#).

Many people are describing this weather as the "new normal" but climate experts disagree. The National Academy of Science published a study which suggests that we are approaching a [tipping point with climate change](#); a point from which there may be no return. This study found that we are quickly approaching a global temperature that could trigger feedback cycles that drive global temperature to 4 or 5 degrees above pre-industrial temperatures. These are temperatures that would, in the words of the researchers, make Earth uninhabitable.

**It is in this context that we recommend that Bill 4 not be supported; that the Government maintain, and modify where needed, Ontario's existing cap-and-trade program and the many programs that it is supports.**

In Ontario, where the greatest sources of climate emissions are the [transportation sector \(33%\), buildings \(22%\), and industry \(18%\)](#), we need policies and programs that cut emissions deeply and quickly from these sources. Ontario's [cap-and-trade program](#) has been encouraging the industrial sector to cut emissions in a cost-effective way, while collecting [\\$2.8 billion in funds](#) that were being used to fund public transit, the electrification of the transportation sector, cycling infrastructure, and energy efficiency projects and renewable energy projects for farms, hospitals, schools, businesses and residences. In other words, these funds were being used to encourage reductions in climate emissions from the other sectors responsible for a significant percentage of Ontario's emissions.

In fact, many of the programs supported by Ontario's existing cap and trade program can produce immediate and long-term benefits for human health, the cost of living, and the economy. Investments in public transit reduce air pollution, save commuters money, and decrease traffic congestion. Investments in energy efficiency for homes, schools, hospitals and low-income housing reduce air pollution, save consumers money, and save tax dollars, while creating local jobs. Investments in renewable energy and the electrification of the transportation sector can reduce air pollution and health care costs while encouraging innovation, new economic opportunities, and new jobs.

**Should the government proceed with Bill 4 and repeal the *Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016*, it must be replaced quickly with a plan that commits Ontario to:**

- Meet the long-term hard emission target needed to meet Canada's international commitments to limit warming to 1.5 degrees C (i.e. reducing Ontario's climate emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050);
- Meet the benchmark targets needed to ensure we meet our long-term target (i.e. 15% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 37% below 1990 levels by 2030);
- Review its progress on climate reductions on an annual basis and review its plan at least every 5 years;
- Establish policies and programs for the transportation, industry and buildings sectors that have been shown with modelling to be capable of reducing climate emissions to the degree needed to meet our benchmarks and target; and
- Prioritize those climate action policies and programs which provide health and social co-benefits by reducing air pollution, increasing access to jobs and services, increasing levels of physical activity, reducing traffic congestion, producing local jobs and/or reducing consumer costs and taxes.

As health professionals deeply concerned about the health impacts of climate change, we believe that we cannot afford the time to develop a brand new Climate Action Plan for Ontario; that the current plan should be maintained and modified where needed. On October 8<sup>th</sup>, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its newest report which says that we must keep the global temperature increase below 1.5 degrees C if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change that would make the world uninhabitable. **We are running out of time to preserve a stable world for our children and grand-children.**

Yours truly,



Kim Perrotta, MHSc  
Executive Director