



November 25, 2009

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

Canada's physicians believe that: *What is good for the environment is also good for human health.* The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, the Canadian Medical Association and The College of Family Physicians of Canada strongly urge the Government of Canada to make health central to the discussions at the upcoming United Nations Climate Conference in Copenhagen.

Climate change is an under-acknowledged threat to human health in this millennium. Heat waves, drought, sea level changes, catastrophic weather events and the loss of arable land are not abstract events of the planet earth; they directly and indirectly harm humans.

The catastrophic heat wave of 2003 caused the deaths of more than 35,000 people in Europe and triggered a drought that severely damaged crops. Climate changes will also change the habitat for many insect-borne diseases, including malaria and West Nile Virus. Canada may be able to cope, but the poorest countries of the world will not.

The global warming that the world is now experiencing results almost entirely from the burning of fossil fuels and from unconstrained, unsupportable and environmentally destructive industrial practices.

Policies designed to reduce greenhouse gases and investments in alternative, ecologically friendly energy sources support sustainable development and an eco-friendly economy.

The upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference offers an opportunity for Canada to demonstrate leadership in the fight against global warming.

We the under-signed call upon the Government of Canada to:

1. become a global leader in promoting equitable, carbon neutral economic, industrial, and social policies, and practices that fight global warming and ensure sustainable development; and
2. adopt specific green house gas reduction targets as determined by the evolving science of climate change.

Both the moral imperative and enlightened self-interest demand that you act to curb climate change. The welfare of our children and grandchildren hangs in the balance.

Yours sincerely,



G. William N. Fitzgerald CM, MD, FRCSC
President,
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada



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