

CHRIS BUCKLEY
President
PATTY COATES
Secretary-Treasurer
AHMAD GAIED
Executive Vice-President



**ONTARIO
FEDERATION OF
LABOUR**

Sent via email

June 2, 2017

The Honourable Jane Philpott
Minister of Health
Health Canada

The Honourable Catherine McKenna
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Environment and Climate Change Canada

The Honourable Kirsty Duncan
Minister of Science
Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

The Honourable Judy Foote
Minister of Public Services and Procurement
Public Services and Procurement Canada

Dear Ministers,

RE: Consultation on the Proposed Regulatory Approach for Asbestos

June 1st marked the 34th anniversary of Injured Workers Day here in Ontario, where we recognize those workers who have been injured or are sick because of their job. All workers deserve a safe workplace, and the labour movement continues to strongly advocate to ensure the better treatment of all workers.

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL), which is Canada's largest provincial labour federation and represents 54 affiliates and one million workers, is pleased to be part of a bigger movement that has long advocated for a ban on asbestos.

Asbestos exposure is a leading cause of work-related deaths in the country. Moreover, recent figures from Statistics Canada show that the number of cases and deaths from mesothelioma, a deadly cancer caused primarily by workplace asbestos exposure, has continued to rise and shows no signs of slowing down. The OFL is therefore encouraged to see the federal government taking steps in the right direction, implementing new regulations under Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (CEPA 1999) to ban asbestos.

There is, however, more work to be done.

.../2

The OFL endorses all 14 recommendations of the Canadian Labour Congress (attached), including the following:

- Canada should ban all substances containing asbestos at any measurable concentration and should support the development of alternatives to asbestos.
- Canada must establish a regulatory framework requiring existing buildings with asbestos-containing materials be audited, identified, and labelled – in addition to prohibiting the use of asbestos-containing materials in new buildings or renovations.
- Canada’s federal government must demonstrate leadership working with provincial and territorial, municipal and First Nations governments to assist other levels of government in developing registries of asbestos-containing properties.
- The federal government must demonstrate leadership with provincial and territorial governments to develop minimum national certification standards for asbestos removal contractors.
- A national registry to track occurrences of asbestos diseases should be created and maintained in collaboration with provincial, territorial and First Nations governments.
- Canada must develop a comprehensive health response to asbestos diseases, including working with other levels of government on early detection and treatment as well as monitoring the health of workers who are exposed to asbestos.
- Proposed CEPA regulations should include an expert advisory panel with a tripartite membership from government (all levels), worker and employer representatives, for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the ban.

Years of struggle by workers and their unions have resulted in many health and safety advancements – but the fight continues to keep workers safe.

The OFL strongly encourages the government to take immediate action on the labour movement’s recommendations to ensure that workplaces are safe for all workers.

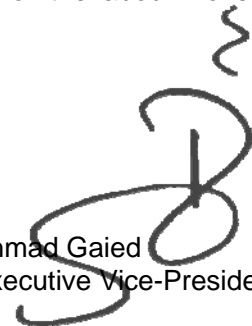
Sincerely,



Chris Buckley
President



Patty Coates
Secretary-Treasurer



Ahmad Gaied
Executive Vice-President

CC: Ontario Minister of Labour, Hon. Kevin Flynn
Hassan Yussuf, President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)
Ontario Federation of Labour Executive Board