



MEDIA AVAILABILITY

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Government's announcement to ban asbestos: Groups express support but asbestos work not yet complete

Toronto – The federal government's announcement to ban asbestos has been highly anticipated over the past few days. Groups expressed its support to the announcement but notes their expectation for additional federal work needed to fully achieve protection from asbestos for all Canadians.

"The federal announcement to ban asbestos in Canada comes at a crucial time as the health data confirms that deaths from asbestos related diseases has continued to increase in Canada" states Fe de Leon, Researcher at the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

"This news is important if Canada is to achieve comprehensive protection from asbestos exposure," explains Theresa McClenaghan, Executive Director and Counsel, Canadian Environmental Law Association. "We look forward to working with the government to ensure the remaining challenges associated with asbestos are addressed."

"The federal government's decision to ban asbestos is welcome news for CAUT members and other workers exposed to asbestos in their workplaces", says David Robinson, Executive Director at the Canadian Association of University Teachers. "However, there are still many other issues regarding asbestos that need to be addressed, and CAUT looks forward to working with our partners to ensure this work is addressed by the government."

The announcement of the ban is significant to protect the health of Canadians, particularly in the occupational setting. According to Statistics Canada, the number of new cases of mesothelioma, a rare form of cancer caused by exposure to asbestos in the workplace, increased from 335 cases in 2000 to 580 cases in 2013. Some other asbestos-induced diseases include lung cancers and asbestosis (with estimates of at least 1900 new cases annually).

The Canadian Environmental Law Association and the Canadian Association of University Teachers, two of 68 signatories on a letter addressed to the Prime Minister urging a ban on asbestos and the establishment of an expert panel review on asbestos.

See letter to the Prime Minister at <http://www.cela.ca/letter-ban-asbestos-expert-panel>.

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