



Nathan Cullen

Member of Parliament
Skeena Bulkley-Valley

Confederation Building, Rm 825
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Tel: (613) 993-6654
Fax: (613) 993-9007



Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

March 17, 2010

Dear Mr. Harper,

The NDP will be putting forward a motion cancel the government's proposed contribution to the Asbestos Institute at the Natural Resources Committee on March 18th, 2010. I invite you and your colleagues to support this motion and put an end to the subsidization of this deadly industry.

As you are well aware, asbestos is a known carcinogen that has claimed the lives of countless Canadians. Its use is currently banned in more than 50 countries, and is condemned by the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization and the US Environmental Protection Agency as a deadly substance. In spite of overwhelming proof of the harm caused by asbestos in all forms, Canada continues to mine and export this carcinogen for use in developing countries.

Against the overwhelming scientific and medical consensus on the dangers of asbestos in all forms, the Chrysotile Institute (formerly the Asbestos Institute) continues to promote the use of the substance in developing countries. This taxpayer-funded industry lobby group has assaulted respected scientists and promoted baseless claims that asbestos disappears when mixed with cement. It continues to promote the sale and use of asbestos in developing countries sentencing workers in India, Indonesia and elsewhere to death by asbestos.

The Main Estimates for 2010-2011 propose to give \$250,000 to the Asbestos Institute (now known as the Chrysotile Institute) to enable the perverse promotion of this deadly substance abroad. It is both wrong and immoral for Canada to condone the export of asbestos and to use tax-payers' money to promote this lethal industry.

The NDP has been actively opposing the international promotion of asbestos. Bill C-399, which I introduced in June 2009, would ban the mining and export of asbestos while helping the workers of the last operational mine transition towards healthier economic opportunities.

I have been pleased to note that a number of members of your caucus, including Pat Davidson and Dona Cadman, have been able to see through the politics which often entangle this issue and have stated their support for a ban on the export of asbestos. I would encourage you to support them in this respect.

On the basis of the proven science and on the opinion of medical professionals both within Canada and abroad, I urge you to request that the Conservative members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources support our motion to end the taxpayer-funded subsidy to this deadly industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Cullen', written in a cursive style.

Nathan Cullen
M.P. Skeena-Bulkley Valley