



CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DU DROIT DE
L'ENVIRONNEMENT



Conservation
Council
of New Brunswick



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Smart Regulation: Anything but “Smart”

Environment and Canadians' health at increased risk under federal government “smart” regulation plan

Toronto, Ontario – The federal government’s plan for so-called smart regulation released today threatens the effective protection of the health, safety and environment of Canadians, according to some of Canada’s leading environmental organizations.

“This plan puts industry’s interests ahead of public interest and could have significant consequences for the environment and Canadians’ health,” said Dr. Rick Smith, Executive Director, Environmental Defence. “Industry doesn’t need the federal government’s help promoting its business interests.”

Ottawa is clearly headed in the wrong direction. A recent report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) called on Canada to do more to improve its environmental performance by strengthening compliance and enforcement of environmental regulations. Enforceable regulations which are adequately funded have proven to be the most effective at protecting public health and the environment, and surveys of business leaders show that enforceable regulations provide the strongest motivation for compliance.

“The government’s proposals ignore the conclusions and advice of the Walkerton and North Battleford Inquiries, the Auditor General, the Royal Society of Canada and other authoritative sources on recent failures of Canada’s regulatory systems, and the need to provide more effective protection of public health, safety and the environment,” said Dr. Mark Winfield, Director of Environmental Governance for the Pembina Institute. “Instead, the ‘smart regulation’ initiative is constructed on the pleadings of special interests. It is Canada’s own version of ‘no lobbyist left behind’.”

“The purpose of this legislation is not environmental protection. There is little doubt this will result in less protection of our water, air, health and natural environment,” said Bruce Cox, Executive Director of Greenpeace.

Surveys over the last decade show that the vast majority of Canadians expect governments to enforce regulations to protect the environment and human health: 78% of respondents in one survey wanted environmental regulations to be strictly enforced, even in times of recession; and, 88% in another poll agreed government should pass laws to make industries protect the environment, even if it interferes with businesses’ rights to make their own decisions.

“The lack of accountability in Ottawa’s plan is a sure fire way to put the Canadian population and its environment at risk. Such an approach seems anything but ‘smart’,” said Paul Muldoon, Executive Director, Canadian Environmental Law Association. “The federal government needs a renewed commitment to protect public health, safety and the environment.”

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“Smart regulation undermines Parliament as the accountable, elected body responsible for protecting the environment, health and safety of Canadians,” said David Coon, Policy Director for the Conservation Council of New Brunswick. “The only thing smart about ‘smart regulation’ is the clever circumvention of Parliament in setting pollution limits.”

About Environmental Defence: Environmental Defence protects the environment and human health. We research. We educate. We go to court when we have to. All in order to ensure clean air, safe food and thriving ecosystems. Nationwide. www.environmentaldefence.ca

About the Pembina Institute: The Pembina Institute is a national independent, non-profit environmental and energy policy research and education organization, with offices in Ottawa-Gatineau, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Drayton Valley, Alberta. www.pembina.org

About Greenpeace: Greenpeace is an independently funded organization that works to protect the environment. We challenge government and industry to halt harmful practices by negotiating solutions, conducting scientific research, introducing clean alternatives, carrying out peaceful acts of civil disobedience and educating and engaging the public. www.greenpeace.ca

About the Canadian Environmental Law Association: The Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) is a non-profit, public interest organization established in 1970 to use existing laws to protect the environment and to advocate environmental law reforms. Funded by Legal Aid Ontario, CELA is one of 79 community legal clinics located across Ontario. See CELA’s submission on “smart regulation” at <http://www.cela.ca/coreprograms/detail.shtml?x=2017>

About the Conservation Council of New Brunswick: It’s easy to see the problems our planet faces. It’s not always as easy to find the solutions. Since 1969, CCNB has been working to find those solutions, for the benefit of present and future generations. www.conservationcouncil.ca

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