



MEDIA RELEASE

Attention: News/Environment/Health Editors

Health, environment and labour organizations support legislation to reduce toxic substances where Ontarians live, work and play and ensure industries in Ontario stay competitive internationally

Toronto, April 7, 2009 — The *Take Charge on Toxics* campaign, a broad coalition of respected health, environment and labour organizations, is pleased with the introduction of toxic use reduction legislation today. The Government of Ontario has taken the first step to reduce toxic substances and increase green chemistry in Ontario.

Today's legislation is good news for Ontarians. Combined with strong regulations it will reduce or eliminate toxic chemicals in products and in the environment. This means fewer cancer-causing substances as well as other toxic substances in the environment. A Canadian Cancer Society public poll, conducted by Ipsos Reid in October 2008, indicates 77% of Ontarians believe toxic substances exist in their environments and the vast majority of these people (over 80%) are concerned those toxics affect their health and the health of their families.

Toxic use reduction is the type of forward-thinking legislation needed to stimulate new research, industrial processes and technologies that will make Ontario more competitive internationally. Strong toxic use reduction legislation can integrate the best in health protection with a concern for a sustainable economy, a clean environment and good jobs.

The legislation establishes a strong foundation for reporting on the use and release of toxic substances by industry. The Society's poll indicates public support for the government's commitment to require industries to develop toxics reduction plans is overwhelming (96%). When asked if the current economic situation caused the respondents to rethink their support for a toxics reduction plan, 67% said no.

Members of the *Take Charge on Toxics* campaign look forward to working with government to ensure strong regulations are developed to support and strengthen the legislation.

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To achieve this, the regulations should:

- Reduce the release of toxic chemicals in places where people live, work and play to protect public health.
- Replace toxic chemicals where safer alternatives exist.
- Restrict the use of toxic chemicals.
- Report on progress and monitor emissions, holding industry accountable to reduce their use of toxic substances through the development and enforcement of new regulations.
- Reveal to all Ontarians the toxic chemicals in their workplaces, community and homes.

Since one of the components of this legislation focuses on informing the public, *Take Charge on Toxics* encourages you to make your voice heard. Visit takechargeontoxics.ca for more information.

QUOTES

"As community members, workers and consumers, we all have the right to know about the environmental and occupational risks we are being exposed to so that we can make informed decisions about our health. The Canadian Cancer Society applauds the Government of Ontario for taking action to reduce toxic substances where we live, work and play. We look forward to working with government to ensure the supporting regulations have a strong community right to know component." – **Peter Goodhand, Chair, Take Charge on Toxics campaign; Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division.**

"In 2006, Ontario industry released 2,736,369 kilograms of carcinogens to the air according to the Federal National Pollutant Release Inventory. Overall the Province released 875,704,954 kg of reportable substances to all media. These volumes attest to the failure of a pollution control approach and demonstrate it is time that we shift our regulatory focus to pollution prevention." - **Sarah Miller, Co-ordinator and Water Policy Researcher, Canadian Environmental Law Association.**

"The Steelworkers Union supports toxic use reduction because it will protect workers health and community health. We also support the legislation because it will help protect manufacturing jobs in this province and attract more. Companies need to reduce their chemical use to be more competitive in international markets and to meet increasing international standards. If

government guarantees the right to know and provides incentives, this can go a long way to achieving our objectives." - **Andrew King, National Health Safety and Environment Co-ordinator/ Department Leader, United Steelworkers Union.**

"We're pleased the Government of Ontario is moving ahead with toxic use reduction legislation. Assuming it has strong regulations, it will improve Ontarians health by phasing out the toxic chemicals that make people sick. It will also help Ontario businesses compete in a world market where people are increasingly demanding non-toxic products." - **Gideon Forman, Executive Director, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment.**

"Nurses know the harm caused by toxic pollution and that's why we applaud the significant steps proposed by the McGuinty government to reduce dangerous levels of exposure. We urge the government to do what is right and strengthen this bill by immediately guaranteeing the public's right to know about the dangerous hazards that exist in the products people consume and the environment in which they live," says **Wendy Fucile, president of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO).**

"April is Cancer Month and the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition welcomes legislation that will at last put Ontario on a path to reducing our use of chemicals that are known to cause cancer. In Toronto citizens can get access to information about pollution in their own neighbourhoods. Ontario's programs will now benefit communities province-wide." - **Ruth Grier, Environmental and Occupational Working Group, Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition.**

"We applaud the Government of Ontario for introducing legislation that will reduce Ontarians' exposure to toxics, especially for those suffering from asthma and COPD. The Ontario Lung Association supports research into new green technologies and efforts to identify new and safer alternatives to toxics" - **George Habib, President and CEO, Ontario Lung Association.**

"Contrary to what many Canadians think, at least fifty per cent of cancers are preventable. While 'lifestyle' factors are important, we are all exposed to cancer causing chemicals on a daily basis, usually without our knowledge or consent. Prevent Cancer Now is extremely pleased to see a focus on environmental contaminants. Toxic use reduction legislation in Ontario will support organizations across Canada working to make our air, water and food safer." - **Diana Daghofer, Chair, Prevent Cancer Now.**

"Today's legislation is a great first step to protecting everyone in Ontario for toxic substances. Ontario Public Health Association congratulates the Government of Ontario for their hard work on this issue and looks forward to working with them on the regulations." – **Liz Haugh, OPHA President – Elect.**

The *Take Charge on Toxics* campaign is comprised of a broad coalition of respected health, environment and labour organizations aimed at ensuring Ontario's toxic use reduction legislation reduces Ontarians risk of developing cancer by effectively addressing toxic chemicals where people live, work and play. To learn more about the *Take Charge on Toxics* campaign and members, visit our website at www.takechargeontoxics.ca.

The campaign is supported by:
Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division
Canadian Environmental Law Association
Ontario Public Health Association
United Steelworkers
Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition
Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment
Ontario College of Family Physicians
Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
Ontario Lung Association
Prevent Cancer Now
Women's Health and Environmental Network (WHEN)

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For further information: Christine Koserski, Media Relations, *Take Charge on Toxics Campaign*: 416-323-3070 or ckoserski@ontario.cancer.ca.