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Government Motion to Prioritize Environmental Protection Act Passed

For Immediate Release

November 3, 2006

OTTAWA, November 2, 2006 – During this morning’s meeting of the House Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, the Committee was able to successfully defeat attempts by the Liberals and the Bloc to continue delaying the review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA).

During the meeting, Mark Warawa, Parliamentary Secretary to the Environment Minister, introduced a motion, *“That the Committee schedule one additional meeting each week until Christmas Parliamentary break to continue the review of CEPA, given that the Committee is mandated to review CEPA every 5 years and given that CEPA is the cornerstone legislation in Canada for the protection of the environment.”*

Even though the Committee has been mandated to review CEPA to modernize the Act and make it more effective, the Liberals and the Bloc have so far opposed all attempts to continue the review, which began in May 2006.

Previous suggestions by Conservative members to continue the review of CEPA before discussion of other business, including Private Member’s Bill C-288, were rejected, even though the Committee has until February 22, 2007 to discuss Bill C-288.

Additional Government suggestions to alternate meetings between discussion of Bill C-288 and CEPA were also shut down. At this morning’s meeting, the Liberals and the Bloc showed their true colours by opposing continued discussions to modernize the Act.

According to **Mark Warawa (MP for Langley)**, *“Today the Government scored a victory for environmental protection. It is clear that the Liberals and the Bloc have no regard for the environment. By contrast, the Conservative members have proved that we are willing to work as long and as hard as necessary in order to make sure that the CEPA review continues for the sake of the environment and the health of Canadians.”*

Mr. Warawa continued, *“The Prime Minister has demonstrated that this government is willing to sit down with other leaders and find the best way to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It’s too bad the Liberals and Bloc are only interested in political games.”*

According to **Jeff Watson**, another Conservative member, “The Liberals have long argued that CEPA is the best tool to deal with air quality. In fact, this was the argument that was used to dismiss the need for a Clean Air Act. Now, however, they want to abandon the mandated review and refuse to give it the priority it deserves. The Liberals and the Bloc demonstrated today that they are merely playing with the health of Canadians for partisan purposes.”

Quebec Conservative MP Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert) added, “The Liberals and the Bloc are more interested in being divisive and using partisan tactics to embarrass the government than working together to improve the health and lives of Canadians. These opposition parties strut around in the House bravely when the cameras are on, but when the cameras are off and it is time to work, they show themselves to be less valiant.”

MP Maurice Vellacott, who is also a member of the Environment Committee, added, “While the Liberals and Bloc grandstand in the House on the need to strengthen CEPA and protect the environment, they undermine that very Act in Committee. The attempt to delay the CEPA review to study a Liberal Private Members Bill is a blatantly partisan move and an insult to Canadians.”

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For further comment, call (613) 992-1966 or 297-2249