

A-BAN – Asian Ban Asbestos Network

TO:

Québec Premier Jean Charest and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper

c/o Antenne du Quebec Seoul

5F, Leema building 146-1 Soosong-dong,
Jongno-gu, Seoul
110-755 Korea

c/o Canadian Embassy

16-1 Jeongdong Chongnogu Seoul
100-662 Korea

Dear Premier Charest and Prime Minister Harper,

We are representatives of Asian academia, environmental and labor groups as well as asbestos victims and their family associations all over the Asian countries. We're writing this letter on behalf of A-BAN (Asian Ban Asbestos Network) which is an Asian regional network of Asian asbestos victims and citizens concerned about asbestos threats, including hundreds of labour unions, occupational and health organizations and environmental groups.

Today, on Québec's National Holiday, we call on you to stop your government's proposed \$58 million subsidy to save the bankrupt Jeffrey asbestos mine. If it gets this subsidy from your government, the Jeffrey mine plans to export 200,000 tonnes of asbestos a year to Asia and elsewhere for the next 25 to 50 years. If it does not get this subsidy, the mine will be shut down.

In past years, Canada has been exporting more than 200,000 tones of asbestos a year. Asbestos is one of the best known deadly human carcinogens, and is now claiming more than 100,000-150,000 cancer deaths a year worldwide. As Canada is the only remaining western country that exports asbestos pollution to the developing world, we join the international community in blaming the double standard of Canada.

Canada has been targeting Asian markets for its asbestos export (86% in 2009), as its consumption has dwindled down in other parts of the world. With declining markets, the asbestos industry in Canada has been dying out. However, Quebec province is now planning to open a new asbestos mine with a huge government subsidy to this dying industry.

Premier Charest, Québec's asbestos export dishonours Québec. Like others around the world, we are outraged that you are contemplating subsidising the export of asbestos death. Please give this \$58 million subsidy to help asbestos victims, not to create more victims.

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A fundamental principle of public health and human rights is that the greatest protection must be given to the most vulnerable. If, therefore, you are determined to subsidise asbestos, we ask that the 200,000 tonnes of asbestos a year be put in Québec and Canadian schools, hospitals and buildings and not exported overseas where protections are few and people are extremely vulnerable to asbestos harm. On this day, which is supposed to be a day of pride for Québec, do not bring shame on Québec, Premier Charest.

We urgently await your response,

Best regards

24 June 2010

Asian Ban Asbestos Network

Co-chairs

Prof. Domyung Paek, Seoul University, Korea and Ban Asbestos Network Korea (BANKO)

Prof. Takehiko Muramaya, Waseda University, Japan

Mr. Apo Leong, Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC), Hong Kong

Mr. Jagdish Patel, Peoples Training and Research Centre (PTRC), India and Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational Accident Victims (ANROAV)

Mr. Apolinar Tolentino, Building and Wood Workers' International Asia Pacific, Malaysia

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Death Export



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