



Media Release

Fix Provincial/Territorial Laws to Prevent Radon-Induced Lung Cancer

Health and Environmental Groups Send Health-Focused Policy Challenge to Provincial and Territorial Premiers and Health Ministers

October 30, 2015

Toronto – In time for Radon Action Month in November, a health-focused policy challenge was sent today to all of Canada's Provincial and Territorial Premiers and their Health Ministers.

“Radon-induced lung cancer is a preventable public health threat. Strengthening regulations to test for and reduce radon levels would significantly improve individual health as well as lower health care costs,” states Barb MacKinnon, CEO with the New Brunswick Lung Association.

Naturally occurring from the breakdown of uranium in the ground, radon can be trapped indoors where we spend most of our time. “Exposure to radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers, with over 16 percent of lung cancer deaths among Canadians being attributable to radon,” notes MacKinnon.

“Our [Radon Policy Challenge](#) provides Canada's Premiers and their Health Ministers with key facts about radon and nine recommendations for action,” stated Kathleen Cooper, Senior Researcher with the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA).

“We are seeking health-focused action in multiple areas of provincial and territorial jurisdiction, based on a comprehensive report that reviewed radon law and policy across Canada,” Cooper noted.

“We know that some progress has already been made, notably in updating Building Codes, mainly applicable to new construction. But, much more action is needed,” stated Cooper.

In addition to ensuring Building Code modernization, the Radon Policy Challenge seeks changes to laws governing public health, residential tenancies, schools and child care centres, as well as those related to occupiers' liability, real estate transactions, and home warranties.

We also need to ensure that energy efficiency programs don't ignore the risk of trapping radon indoors when building envelopes are tightened.

“Wherever we spend time indoors, we should be testing for radon and remediating if necessary. There should also be a public right-to-know about test results and data-sharing across governments,” stated Cooper.

Canadian Environmental Law Association

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“This is an entirely fixable problem for which the solutions are within reach.” noted Erica Phipps, Executive Director with the Canadian Partnership for Children’s Health and Environment (CPCHE). “We know that radon causes lung cancer. We know how to test for it and what to do if levels are high. We know that long-term exposure to elevated radon amplifies the risk posed by the other big lung cancer culprit: tobacco smoke. Now we need the courage and investment to ensure that the homes and buildings where we spend time – and especially where our children spend time – are not a source of this preventable lung cancer risk.”

Download the [Radon Policy Challenge](#) / [Incitation à agir en matière de politique sur le radon](#)

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