



Dear Stephen Harper,

October 8th, 2015

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Re: Request for your support for a ban on asbestos in Canada

I am writing on behalf of Ban Asbestos Canada, to ask for your support for a ban on asbestos in Canada and for the implementation of a comprehensive asbestos strategy.

Ban Asbestos Canada is a network of asbestos victims, families who have lost or are losing a loved one to asbestos, non-profit advocacy groups, public health organizations and experts, and labour and employer organizations. Our call for a ban, details on the asbestos strategy and a list of supporting organizations and individuals are attached.

The call for an asbestos ban is urgent. This year, approximately 2,000 Canadians will receive the grim news that they have cancer caused by asbestos. Many will die, including most of those (approximately 500 people annually) diagnosed with mesothelioma, a cancer uniquely caused by asbestos exposure. Sadly, asbestos use continues today in Canada – in imported brake pads, asbestos cement pipe and even children’s crayons!

The International Agency for Research on Cancer has documented that all forms of asbestos cause cancer. The World Health Organization has stated that there is no known safe exposure limit for asbestos, regardless of what “acceptable exposure limits” may exist. For many victims there is no cure. With evolving technology, there are safe and effective alternatives to asbestos. In response, over 50 countries have banned asbestos. Now is the time for Canada to join them.

Never in Canadian history have so many voices been raised in support of a ban, including recent editorials in the Toronto Globe and Mail and the Toronto Star.

- Globe and Mail – July 4, 2015 – “The next logical steps are a ban on asbestos and a comprehensive plan for its safe removal from homes, schools, office buildings and cars.”
- Toronto Star – July 4, 2015 – “Providing accurate warnings is a useful first step. But what’s really needed is a total ban, coupled with a national asbestos removal program.”

This federal election provides the opportunity for Canada to make a historic breakthrough on asbestos. The question around asbestos is no longer whether or not it is safe. That debate was settled by science – there is no such thing as safe asbestos. The question

now is whether Canada's political parties will commit to finally move forward with a complete ban, accompanied by a comprehensive strategy to protect the public, to support the victims, and to address the lingering problem of asbestos in our built environment.

On behalf of Ban Asbestos Canada, I am asking that you reply prior to October 19, 2015, with your party's position.

Thank you

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Chénier', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr. Andréane Chénier
On behalf of Ban Asbestos Canada