

26 July 2012

TO:

Québec Premier Jean Charest and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper

c/o Canadian High Commission
7/8 Shantipath, Chanakyapuri
New Delhi 110 021, India

Dear Premier Charest and Prime Minister Harper,

We are members of Indian environmental and labour groups as well as asbestos victims and their family associations, and other concerned citizens including doctors all over the country.

We call on you to cancel Quebec government's \$58 million subsidy to re-open the bankrupt Jeffrey asbestos mine. Jeffrey mine plans to export 200,000 tonnes of asbestos annually to Asia, especially to India, for the next 25 to 50 years. It spells the death knoll for Asian workers and people, who will be exposed to this deadly mineral and die of diseases like asbestos induced lung cancer, asbestosis and Mesothelioma. According to academic research every 170 tonne of asbestos consumption results in about 1 Mesothelioma victim. The industrialised western world, including your own country, is faced with an epidemic like situation due to the past and ongoing exposure to asbestos. And you know this very well. Your own scientific community and reputed medical professionals from across the globe have repeatedly forewarned you about this reality.

Hear our plea: ***stop mining and exporting asbestos***. Québec's Medical and Health authorities oppose this mine project and have called on the Québec government to stop the mining and export of asbestos, saying that these activities are medically unacceptable. The World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization and the International Trade Union Confederation, representing 176 million workers in 151 countries have all called for an end to the use of all forms of asbestos, including chrysotile asbestos, which currently represents 100% of the global asbestos trade.

Canada has been targeting Asian markets for its asbestos export (86% in 2009), as its own consumption has dwindled down in other parts of the world. In the past several years, Canada has been exporting more than 200,000 tonnes of asbestos a year. Asbestos is one of the scientifically proven 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 standards of Canada. In fact, your government is spending millions of dollars to remove chrysotile and other forms of asbestos from Quebec's schools, hospitals and buildings in order to protect the lives of the Quebec people.

Premier Charest, Québec's Asbestos export dishonours Québec. Like others around the world, we are outraged with this export of death. Please give this \$58 million subsidy for care and rehabilitation of asbestos victims in Asia, and not to generate more victims.

The Canadian government has the opportunity and the moral duty to end the deadly asbestos legacy.

For the sake of humanity, we urge you to stop mining and exporting asbestos that continues to kill and maim innocent people around the world. If a positive action is not taken, the future generations will never forgive you.

We await your response with much hope.

Sincerely

Endorsed by:

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1.	Madhumita Dutta	Corporate Accountability Desk, The Other Media
2.	Mohit Gupta	Occupational and Environmental Health Network of India
3.	H. Mahadevan	All India Trade Union Congress, New Delhi
4.	Dr Rajeev Sharma	Regional Policy Officer, Building and Woodworkers International, South Asia Office
5.	Sudhershnan Rao Sarde	Director, IndustriALL South Asia Regional Office
6.	R A Mittal	Secretary, Hind Majdoor Sabha
7.	P J Raju	Secretary, Indian National Trade Union Congress
8.	Raghunath K.Manwar	OHSA, Ahmedabad-Gujarat [INDIA]
9.	M.V.Prajapati	OHSA, Ahmedabad-Gujarat [INDIA]
10.	Hemavati Gaundar	Family Member, Asbestosis Victim
11.	Kalngi Kondapani	Family Member, Asbestosis Victim
12.	Murgeshan Dravid	Family Member, Asbestosis Victim
13.	Naran Mehra	Asbestosis Victim, Gujarat –India
14.	Ashok Shrimali	Gujarat Prakruti Bachav Samit
15.	R Sreedhar	Mines, minerals and People
16.	Nishant Alag	Mining Information Clearinghouse of India
17.	B P Yadav	Environics Trust
18.	Jagdish Patel	Peoples Training and Research Centre
19.	Sanjiv Pandita	Asia Monitoring Resource Centre
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25.	Samantha Agarwal	Activist, Raipur, India
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