

MARCH 29, 2007

NDP DECLARES VICTORY FOR CLEAN AIR

Layton and Cullen proud of accomplishments on C-30

OTTAWA - New Democrats on Parliament Hill claimed victory for cleaner air and greenhouse gas reductions today in Ottawa.

The NDP proposed and passed a series of comprehensive changes to Bill C-30 that will re-commit Canada to its Kyoto Protocol obligations and make Canada's air cleaner for ordinary Canadians and their families.

When the Conservative government tabled their so-called "Clean Air Act," NDP Leader Jack Layton demanded something better from the prime minister. Layton presented the Harper with a plan to let members of parliament rewrite the Bill on behalf of hardworking Canadians who were fed up after years of inaction on climate change.

"This could have only happened in a minority government. Legislators writing legislation doesn't sound like a unique concept - but it is very rare in Ottawa, especially for those of us in opposition," said Nathan Cullen (Skeena-Bulkley Valley). "I'm thrilled we could rewrite this bill from top to bottom. The new law will really go after the root cause of climate change - greenhouse gases."

The NDP led the charge and the opposition parties united to present the House of Commons with real environmental legislation.

"The NDP took the lead in creating this committee," says Layton, "and we didn't back down when everyone else said it wouldn't work. We created the committee that will now put before the House of Commons real environmental legislation that commits us to our Kyoto obligations and makes the air we all breathe cleaner."

Cullen put aside partisan rancour and division to unite opposition parties to pass 11 of 12 NDP amendments. However, the NDP environment critic says he is still cautious about declaring an all-out victory.

"We are taking this victory one step at a time. We will defend it in the House of Commons and use every tool within our reach to ensure this bill is voted on and passed," said Cullen.

A quick list of NDP amendments is attached.

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GETTING CANADA ON TRACK:

Quick list of the NDP's Amendments to the "Clean Air Act"

The NDP's Proposed Amendments

November 19, 2006 - March 29, 2007

Short-, medium- and long-term greenhouse gas targets. DONE

Earlier deadline for regulating the industrial sector. DONE

A hard cap on greenhouse gas emissions from big polluters. DONE

Leading and mandatory standards for smog-producing "air contaminants". DONE

Leading vehicle fuel efficiency standards. DONE

A cap and trade carbon market. DONE

Eliminate subsidies to oil and gas sector. Cons, Libs & Bloc Ruled Out of Order

Protected gov't authority to regulate air pollutants and greenhouse gases. DONE

Effective provincial equivalency rule. DONE

Authority to designate "significant areas" for environmental protection. DONE

Programs reviewed annually. DONE

Building retrofit fund. DONE