



THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA
LE CONSEIL NATIONAL DES FEMMES DU CANADA

February 2, 2016

The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister, House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H6

Dear Prime Minister:

The CBC has confirmed today that the federal government continues to use asbestos-containing materials in constructing and renovating federal buildings and that the Canada Revenue Agency and Public Services and Procurement continue to use asbestos.

According to the Rotterdam Convention's review committee, chrysotile which is the dominant form of asbestos found in Canada, is unequivocally a human carcinogen, and this view is shared by the World Health Organization.

Since 2010 the National Council of Women of Canada have urged the Government of Canada to: a) establish a Central Registry of Asbestos, b) support the inclusion of Chrysotile asbestos in the Rotterdam Convention, and c) ban mining and exports of all forms of asbestos. In 2015 we also urged the Government to alert the public to the dangerous nature of primary and secondary exposure to asbestos that spans several generations.

There is global consensus that exposure to all types of asbestos can kill – a view supported by the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, the International Programme on Chemical Safety, the European Union, the Collegium Ramazzini, the International Social Security Association, the World Trade Organization, the International Commission on Occupational Health, and 39 countries. In addition, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, Ban Asbestos Canada, and the Canadian Public Health Association have indicated their concern over the continuing use of asbestos.

While Canada's last asbestos mine closed in 2011 and Canada no longer exports asbestos, the importation of products containing asbestos is permitted. Although some provinces have brought in stricter standards for exposure to asbestos, many thousands of Canadians have suffered and died from the effects of direct or secondary contact with asbestos or asbestos residue, and asbestos is the top cause of workplace death. The World Health Organization has declared that no level of exposure to asbestos is acceptable.

Therefore, we find it incomprehensible that asbestos continues to be used and urge the Government to stop the importation of this egregious material and discontinue its use.

Sincerely,

Karen Monnon Dempsey, President
National Council of Women of Canada

cc: The Hon. Catherine McKenna
Minister of Environment and Climate Change

The Hon. Mary Ann Mihychuk
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour

The Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould
Minister of Justice and Attorney-General

Founded in 1893 and incorporated in 1914 by an Act of Parliament, the National Council of Women of Canada is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization (NGO) representing a large number of Canadians of diverse occupations, languages, origins and customs, and reflecting a cross-section of public opinion. We have been given 'national historic significance' status by the Government of Canada in recognition of the major contributions NCWC has made.