



Email: theccej@gmail.com

October 19, 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

Congratulations on your re-election. The Canadian Coalition for Environmental and Climate Justice and partners noted with interest your government's platform commitment to "Table legislation to require the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to examine the link between race, socio-economic status, and exposure to environmental risk, and develop a strategy to address environmental justice." As you prepare for the coming session of Parliament, we are writing to offer our support and to ask you to prioritize this on the government's legislative agenda and in the responsible ministers' mandate letters.

The Canadian Coalition for Environmental and Climate Justice (formerly the National Anti-Environmental Racism Coalition) is a broad and diverse coalition of civil society groups, academics and individuals with expertise in social justice and equity, environmental science and policy, public health and more.

Last spring, we welcomed the government's support for Bill C-230, the *National Strategy Respecting Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Act* (see attached media statement). The favourable report of the House Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development -- supported by three of the four parties represented on the committee -- marked a critical first step toward acknowledging the legacy of environmental racism in Canada and ensuring that all people in Canada benefit from environment protection policies.

We urged all MPs to support Bill C-230 at third reading and were optimistic that Canada's first environmental racism bill was on track to pass in the House of Commons this fall -- until Parliament was dissolved for the election.

To deliver on your platform commitment, we ask the government to re-introduce Bill C-230, as reported by committee, and seek the agreement of other parties to proceed to third reading before the end of the year.

Ensuring that the recent elections do not delay passage of Canada's first environmental racism bill will allow the important work of examining the link between race, socio-economic status and environmental risk, and developing a national environmental justice strategy to begin. Moreover, it would send an important signal at the start of the new session of Parliament and set the stage for the government to deliver on related environmental justice commitments, such as

strengthening the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* including better protections for people most vulnerable to harm from toxic substances and those living in communities where exposure is high; recognizing the right to a healthy environment for the first time in federal law; and the clean-up of contaminated sites in areas where Indigenous, racialized, and low income Canadians live.

Please be assured of the full support of the Canadian Coalition for Environmental and Climate Justice and the undersigned groups for Bill C-230, as reported by committee, as the foundation for the broader suite of actions necessary to advance environmental justice in Canada. We look forward to opportunities to contribute to the development of a national strategy on environmental justice.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ingrid Waldron
Director, The ENRICH Project/
Co-Director, Canadian Coalition for
Environmental and Climate Justice

Naolo Charles
Director, The Black Environmental Initiative/
Co-Director, Canadian Coalition for
Environmental and Climate Justice

Severn Cullis-Suzuki
Executive Director
David Suzuki Foundation

Aisha Francis
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KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice
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Jennifer Beeman
Executive Director
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John Nathaniel Gertler
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Environmental Defence Canada

Chúk Odenigbo
Founding Director
Future Ancestors Services

Dorene Bernard, Sipekne'katik
Mi'kmaki Grassroots Grandmother
Grassroots Grandmothers Circle

Vanessa Hartley, Chair/
Louise Delisle, Founder
SEED (South End Environmental InJustice
Society)

Manvi Bhalla
President and Co-Founder
Shake Up The Establishment

Jessica Clogg
Executive Director
West Coast Environmental Law Association

Marlene Hale
Chief/Activist
Wet'suwet'en Nation

Caroline Merner
Engagement Director
Youth4Nature

Encl. "Canada's first environmental racism bill closer to becoming law: More than a dozen groups urge all MPs to support Bill C-230 in final House vote this fall," media statement, June 22, 2021

Black Environmental Initiative • Breast Cancer Action Quebec • Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) • Canadian Environmental Law Association • Coalition for Environmental Rights • David Suzuki Foundation • Ecojustice • ENRICH Project • Environmental Defence • Équiterre • Greenpeace Canada • KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives • National Anti-Environmental Racism Coalition • Nature Canada • Nova Scotia Voice of Women for Peace • Prevent Cancer Now • Sierra Club Canada Foundation • West Coast Environmental Law

For immediate release:

June 22, 2021

Canada's first environmental racism bill closer to becoming law
*More than a dozen groups urge all MPs to support Bill C-230
in final House vote this fall*

OTTAWA | | TRADITIONAL, UNCEDED TERRITORY OF THE ALGONQUIN ANISHNAABEG PEOPLE — We, a broad and diverse coalition of civil society groups, urge Parliament to move forward with passing an environmental racism law immediately following its summer break. Yesterday, the House of Commons environment committee completed its review of Bill C-230, which mandates the federal government to examine the link between race, socio-economic status and environmental risk. This marked a critical first step toward Canada acknowledging its shameful legacy of environmental racism and ensuring that all people in Canada benefit from environment protection policies.

Renamed the *National Strategy Respecting Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Act*, the bill, if passed, would require the federal environment minister to develop a strategy on environmental racism and environmental justice – a Canadian first. Canada is long overdue for this legislation — parallel requirements have been in place in the U.S. since 1994.

It's good to see Canada finally stepping up, but we have no time to lose to ensure this draft legislation actually becomes law. With the House of Commons scheduled to break for the summer later this week and a potential election this fall, we strongly urge all parties to move the bill through the final stages of the legislative process as soon as possible when Parliament resumes sitting following its summer break. Canadians can't afford a delay of this long-awaited legislation.

Additional information on the review of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable development:

- MP Lenore Zann (Cumberland – Colchester) introduced Bill C-230 in February 2020.
- Three of the four parties represented on the committee supported the bill with amendments. An important sub-amendment, proposed by MP Taylor Bachrach (Skeena – Bulkley Valley) and approved by the committee, stipulates that the national strategy must include information and statistics related to the location of environmental hazards, and an examination of the link between race, socio-economic status and environmental risk, as well as health-outcomes. A lack of disaggregated data about environmental hazards and effects on racialized and low-income people in Canada has obscured the problem and hampers efforts to advance environmental justice.
- The committee tabled its report on Bill C-230 in Parliament today.

The National Anti-Environmental Racism Coalition (NAERC) was formed in 2020 by Ingrid Waldron from the ENRICH Project and Naolo Charles from the Black Environmental Initiative to mobilize organizations and individuals for the environmental protection of Black, Indigenous and immigrant communities and for the promotion of environmental justice in Canada. The National Anti-Environmental Racism Coalition is composed of over 60 organizations working in the social and environmental sector. Our current work is paving the way for the success of a national environmental justice strategy in Canada.

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Please see [here for quotes from NAERC groups and individuals supporting Bill C-230](#).

About:

Environmental racism occurs when environmental policies or practices intentionally or unintentionally result in disproportionate negative impacts on certain individuals, groups or communities based on race or colour, and as well as unequal access to environmental benefits. Examples of environmental racism in Canada have been documented by the ENRICH Project and in a 2020 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights.

For more information or a media interview, please contact:

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