



**ACTION CANCER DU SEIN DU QUÉBEC**  
**BREAST CANCER ACTION QUEBEC**

OUR BODIES, OUR ENVIRONMENT

NEWS RELEASE

## **Quebec civil society takes a stand on the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) calling on the federal government to protect human health and the environment.**

Montreal, March 19, 2018

Over [50 Quebec groups](#) have signed onto a [Declaration](#) that is being sent to the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change **today**. This alliance represents a wide swath of Quebec citizens that goes far beyond the traditional environmental movement. They include among others, well-respected research centres, peri-natal groups, women's and workers' groups, shelters and groups that work against violence, collective kitchens, student, literacy and cultural groups.

CEPA is the foundation of our environmental regulations and it's currently under review by the federal government. Notably, it defines what constitutes a toxic substance, establishes controls on pollution emissions and hazardous wastes. Federal, provincial and municipal laws and regulations are linked to these definitions and controls.

The [Declaration](#) states that it is urgent and crucial that the Parliament of Canada revise the **Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999** in line with the government's own recommendations in their [report](#) submitted in June 2017.

The allied groups have committed to supporting the [Declaration](#) underscoring important elements of CEPA that need reform, and pressuring the government to follow the recommendations and bring in reformed legislation.

- Revise the definition of "toxic" to ensure that it addresses [endocrine disruptors](#).
- Reverse the burden of proof for substances of very high concern such as carcinogens, reproductive toxicants and endocrine disruptors.
- Require that risk assessments include aggregate exposure to and cumulative and synergistic effects of substances under review.
- Take into account vulnerable populations and marginalized communities, including their exposures during critical windows of vulnerability (such as puberty, for example), when assessing risk.
- Require mandatory hazard labelling of all products containing toxic substances.
- Recognize the right to a healthy environment.
- Improve and prescribe timelines applying to toxic substance risk management measures.
- Assess and identify alternatives to toxic substances and place the burden on industry to show that safer substitutes are not available.

CEPA reform is a question of social justice. Disadvantaged and disenfranchised populations are more vulnerable to the impacts of toxic substances and experience higher cumulative effects. The problems are also gendered with women bearing more of the burden of responsibility for the family's health and its consumer choices that impact exposures to toxic substances that are not regulated by the current law. The broad network of civil society associations and groups from all sectors are preoccupied by these issues and press the Canadian government for CEPA reform.

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[Breast Cancer Action Quebec](#) is the only independent breast cancer organization in Canada whose mission is to work for the prevention of breast cancer and the elimination of environmental toxicants linked to the disease.