



June 19, 2025

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Canada

The Honourable Pierre Poilievre, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada

Yves-Francois Blanchet, Leader of the Bloc Québécois

Don Davies, Interim Leader, New Democratic Party of Canada

Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party of Canada

The Honourable Steven MacKinnon, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons

The Honourable Andrew Scheer, House Leader of the Official Opposition

Christine Normandin, House Leader of the Bloc Québécois

The Honourable Dominic Leblanc, President of the King's Privy Council for Canada; Minister responsible for Canada-US Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Transport and Internal Trade

Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, House of Commons

Committee of the Whole, Senate of Canada

**Subject: Bill C-5 jeopardizes the health of children and other at-risk populations, now and into the future**

Dear Prime Minister, Ministers, Party Leaders, Senators, House Leaders and other Members of Parliament:

We write today with deep concern that Bill C-5, *An Act to Enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act*, if not substantively revised, will result in removal of safeguards that protect human health, environmental protections and Indigenous rights.

The proposal to fast-track approvals of major projects such as fossil fuel production, without adequate oversight and contrary to current federal legislation including the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* and the *Impact Assessment Act*, increases risk of adverse health impacts for at-risk populations including children and Indigenous Peoples.

In particular, CPCHE is concerned that the Federal Government has included conventional energy production (oil and gas) as “projects of national interest”<sup>1</sup> that could be built without adequate human and environmental health assessments. While the government announcement suggests that the extent to which a project can “contribute to clean growth and to Canada’s objectives with respect to climate change” will form part of the criteria to evaluate whether a project is designated of national interest, we are concerned that conditionally approving designated projects will result in projects proceeding without prior health and environmental assessments. Fossil fuel production is in direct opposition to clean growth.

The Government’s approach is contrary to their commitment to scientific and evidence-based decision-making, and consultation processes that are open and transparent. By “shifting the focus of federal reviews from

<sup>1</sup> Government of Canada news. June 6, 2025. Intergovernmental Affairs. One Canadian Economy: An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act. Backgrounder.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/intergovernmental-affairs/news/2025/06/one-canadian-economy-an-act-to-enact-the-free-trade-and-labour-mobility-in-canada-act-and-the-building-canada-act.html>

“whether” to build these projects to “how” to best advance them,”<sup>2</sup> this approach risks exempting potentially harmful projects from health and environmental legislation. While the bill indicates that there will be consultation with provinces, territories and affected Indigenous communities before a project is designated as of national interest, it does not specify any requirement for public consultation or opportunities for public review.

The government’s announcement also suggests that the extent to which a project can “advance the interests of Indigenous Peoples” would be taken into account in considering whether a project is in the national interest” and that “Indigenous consultation would be undertaken on appropriate mitigation and accommodation measures.” However, the bill does not speak to seeking free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples.

We collectively support the concerns expressed by the president of CPCHE partner organization, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE), Dr. Melissa Lem, that “...this legislation could accelerate approval for fossil fuel projects at precisely the moment when wildfires and extreme weather are threatening Canadian communities. Any legislation that claims to serve the national interest must prioritize the health of Canadians by ensuring rigorous environmental assessments and respecting Indigenous rights, rather than expediting projects that will increase climate pollution.”<sup>3</sup>

We agree with the recommendation of the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA), another founding CPCHE partner organization, that “Bill C-5 should be withdrawn and carefully reconsidered with public and Indigenous input.”<sup>4</sup> It is imperative that Bill C-5 be revised to ensure that decisions are transparent and based on science and other forms of expertise in service to the long-term health, viability and sustainability of our communities and our country.

Our society faces multiple overlapping crises – the climate crisis, escalating health risks from toxic chemicals, plastics and other forms of pollution, environmental injustice, and the looming threat of economic instability – all of which jeopardize the well-being of Canada’s children. As we stand at this critical moment in our history, rather than eroding our democratic processes, we need a federal government that will safeguard public participation, transparency, the rights of Indigenous peoples, and intergenerational equity.

We urge you to reconsider Bill C5.

Yours sincerely,



Erica Phipps, MPH, PhD  
Executive Director

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<sup>2</sup> Government of Canada news. June 6, 2025. Intergovernmental Affairs. One Canadian Economy: An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act. Backgrounder. <https://www.canada.ca/en/intergovernmental-affairs/news/2025/06/one-canadian-economy-an-act-to-enact-the-free-trade-and-labour-mobility-in-canada-act-and-the-building-canada-act.html>

<sup>3</sup> Climate Action Network Canada. News. June 6, 2025. Bill C-5 jeopardizes democratic process, environmental protections and Indigenous rights: reaction from Climate Action Network Canada. <https://climateactionnetwork.ca/bill-c-5-jeopardizes-democratic-process-environmental-protections-and-indigenous-rights-reaction-from-climate-action-network-canada/>

<sup>4</sup> Canadian Environmental Law Association. June 17, 2025. The Need to Pause or Fix Bill C-5 (One Canadian Economy Act). <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://archive.celafoundation.ca/archive-item/cela-submission-re-the-need-to-pause-or-fix-bill-c-5-one-canadian-economy-act/cela-letter-to-hoc-and-senate-re-bill-c-5-june-17-2025/&source=gmail-imap&ust=1750963379000000&usq=AOvVaw2qL1F7ngh4MMwGl3SL8-0E>

## About CPCHE:

The **Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment (CPCHE)** is a national collaboration of Partner and Affiliate organizations with overlapping missions that have been working together for more than two decades to improve children's environmental health in Canada. Our aim is to increase awareness, mobilize knowledge and catalyze action on children's environmental health issues, with a specific focus on preventing/reducing exposures to toxic chemicals and pollutants during the vulnerable stages of fetal and child development.

[healthyenvironmentforkids.ca](http://healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)

