

H & K Communications

72 Elvaston Avenue
Nepean, Ontario
K2G 3X9

Phone: (613) 829-1800
Fax: (613) 829-2449
E-mail: hturkow@rogers.com

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PRIME MINISTER'S SCRUM FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT

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Phone (613) 829-1800 Fax (613) 829-6181 E-mail hturkow@home.com

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DIMITRI SOUDAS (Prime Minister's Press Secretary):
We're ready? We'll begin with (inaudible), Edmonton Journal.

REPORTER: Prime Minister, Canadians are well aware that oil companies have been enjoying record profits, and they will wonder why taxpayer funds are being used to do the research on carbon capture and storage. What can you say to them?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): Well, I say that the benefits of any kind of technological development ultimately flow to the economy as a whole. This is not an expensive project, and ultimately will involve some industry funding. We're hoping that the funding, the costs will be shared equally by both levels of government and industry, so they will play their role.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: Nous allons continuer avec Marie-Claude Guay, Radio-Canada télé.

JOURNALISTE: Les environnementalistes disent entre autres que le stockage des CO₂ dans le sol, ça ne réduit pas, ça ne coupe pas les émissions de gaz à effet de serre. Est-ce que le stockage de CO₂, c'est vraiment une solution verte pour réduire les émissions de gaz à effet de serre en Alberta?

TR. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: C'est possible. Évidemment on a besoin de travail pour avancer cette technologie d'une façon efficace, mais je pense que c'est le grand espoir pour la réduction des émissions, surtout pour l'industrie pétrolière, et si on peut s'adresser aux défis économiques et...économiques et technologiques, je pense que ça représente vraiment une vraie réduction.

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DIMITRI SOUDAS: Continue with Francis Silvaggio, Global. Francis?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Francis.

REPORTER: Hi Mr. Prime Minister.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Hi.

REPORTER: With this taskforce that's looking into the carbon capture, will this also identify cost outlines. I know the province has been looking at, you know, a \$1.5 billion pipeline project, and obviously they'd like to cost-share this with this. Would that be something that's discussed?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, I presume that one of the things the taskforce will look at, you know, obviously the various hurdles, and one of the hurdles is obviously the economics. And so I assume that they will...they will look at various economic proposals and propose to us whether, whether and how they would be achieved, and at what cost. And there is some serious work to be done on that matter.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: Nous allons continuer avec Rosalie Gosselin-Couture.

JOURNALISTE: Oui, j'aimerais savoir si vous maintenez votre position de 1995 à savoir si le territoire du Québec est divisible?

TR. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Je note que tout le monde, que plusieurs voudraient que je m'implique aux élections du Québec. Évidemment comme Premier ministre, comme un chef d'un parti fédéral, je n'ai pas l'intention de m'ingérer dans une élection provinciale. Je peux dire juste comme Premier ministre et comme chef du gouvernement, je peux dire que évidemment nous favorisons un Canada fort et uni, et nous favorisons un

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Québec fort et uni au sein de notre pays fort et uni. Et j'espère que nous... nous serons capables de poursuivre cet objectif pour plusieurs années.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: We'll continue with Souda Krishnan, City TV.

REPOTER: Prime Minister, some environmentalists here in Alberta who are concerned about climate change are wondering why your government is talking about a pipeline, which some say would be all about recovering more oil, when your government gave other provinces cash for public transit. How does this affect climate change here in Alberta?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, first of all, let me just say that the monies we've announced recently for public transit, those monies are available across the country for similar projects. This is all funding that's distributed on a per capita basis. I don't know what, how much we've released here in Alberta or whether we've come to a final decision on what projects will be funded, but that's a national program, as is the Eco-Trust program, also a national program. In terms of the pipeline, that's, you know, in terms of the various proposals that have been out there, obviously key to the concept of carbon capture and storage would be a pipeline that would move carbon dioxide and other gases from the fields principally around Fort McMurray to the western sedimentary base and more on the west side of the province. It's not about...the pipeline we're talking about here is not a pipeline necessarily for oil or natural gas. It would be a pipeline for gases and that's what the taskforce will be looking at, the economics and technical barriers to achieving that.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: Sarah Galashan, CTV.

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REPORTER: I'm wondering, do you have any kind of timeline or expectations for this pipeline?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Not at the moment. We obviously want to see the report this year, later this year. I think that will give us a better assessment of how far off it is realistically to expect that we would make this technology economically and technically feasible. I can tell you, though, that our government will be announcing within the month, we will be announcing our own, some of the details of our plan for national regulation of greenhouse gases and air pollutants, and that obviously, we will be looking at bringing that, bringing the targets for that plan to commence around the year 2010. So you know, we're moving ahead one way or the other.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: Mike Jenkinson, Edmonton Sun.

REPORTER: Mr. Prime Minister, if I could change the subject briefly, this week the British House of Commons voted overwhelmingly in favour of the proposal to elect the House of Lords 100 percent. Your thoughts on that in context of your Senate reform bill from last year?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, as you know, we have two important Senate reform bills before Parliament right now. One is a bill to shorten the length of senators' terms from the outrageous maximum of 45 years to eight years. That bill has now been in the Senate for ten months. I would encourage the senators to hurry up their detailed analysis of this two-paragraph piece of legislation. (LAUGHTER) But I think the...I think the Senate's reaction, and I also think the – that's bill S-4 by the way. I think the Senate's reaction as well as the interesting development in the House of Lords indicates why we brought forward bill C-43, which is to provide an electoral

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process for future senators. I hope Parliament will give that serious consideration. I think we all understand that in the 21st century, if a legislative body's going to be serious, it has to be elected. That's what we want to see, and since the Senate missed the 20th century, I'd encourage them to skip over that entirely and jump right into the 21st and get on with elections.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: We'll continue with Jason Faquette, Calgary Herald.

REPORTER: Mr. Prime Minister, when new regulations are introduced, whose will take precedence, Alberta's or the federal government's because (inaudible)...

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, we'll hope to work cooperatively with all provinces and territories on a national regulatory plan. At the same time, I think our government has been clear. We're going to bring in a national program that will apply across the country, will treat all regions and sectors equitably, and those will be the minimum standards we will expect in every province in Canada.

REPORTER: As a follow up, should...

DIMITRI SOUDAS: We'll continue, because there's a few other reporters, we'll continue with Jennifer Martin, EnergyNews.com.

REPORTER: Prime Minister, just wondering if you think that this...

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Have you got the microphone on you?

DIMITRI SOUDAS: Just maybe, maybe come on this side.

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REPORTER: Is this going to be a hard sell to the public? The gases in the ground, not the air, the technology is being proven, but it's going to be a tough sell to people rather than as another reporter mentioned, reducing emissions instead?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, I mean, this does reduce the carbon, if we make this technology economically feasible, this does reduce the carbon dioxide released into the air and will, as a consequence, not lead to climate change. What I can tell you is this. I think what the public wants to see, I think where both our governments are headed, very different than some of our oppositions, what the public wants to see is that we tackle this change by developing technology in Canada that can make us a world leader so that our economy in fact benefits from the development of environmental technology and environmental progress. What our public does not want to see is us bring in a bunch of regulations that would squelch economic activity in this country and simply transfer funds to other countries to basically export...to export our jobs and import hot air. I don't think they want to see that, so I think where we're going with this, and where both our governments are going, encouraging technological development is a solution, is what Canadians want to see, and I think they've been very clear on that.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: And we have time for one last question, Carolyn Dunn, CBC.

REPORTER: Hi Prime Minister, I'm wondering if you can address the difference with Premier Stelmach's bill three, where it's intensity-based targets, and what the federal government plans to do. If you're going to work together, that would seem to suggest that the federal government is not going to introduce hard targets.

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RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, the...I haven't seen any of the details of bill three. I understand it was just tabled today. Obviously I'm encouraged that Alberta is, along with a number of other provinces are obviously wanting to pursue greenhouse gas reductions. I say, I'm also...we're all cognizant of the fact that Canadians want us to marry economic or environmental progress with the protection of jobs and standards of living. The federal government, I'm not going to give away any of the details of our own regulatory plan at the moment. It will come out near the end of March, and as I say, it will be equitably enforced across the country.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: Thank you very much. Merci beaucoup.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Thank you. Want to go out and get a shot here?

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