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**SOURCE: PCO**

**DATE: MARCH 8, 2007**

**REFERENCE/ RÉFÉRENCE: 0803doc2**

**LOCATION/LIEU: EDMONTON, AB**

**TIME/ HEURE: 16:26**

**LENGTH/DURÉE: 8 MINUTES**

**PRIME MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT IN EDMONTON**

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(APPLAUSE)

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): Thank you very much, Rona. Mr. Premier, members of the government of Alberta, colleagues from the government of Canada, mesdames et messieurs, your Worship the Mayor – I should acknowledge you as well – mesdames et messieurs, ladies and gentlemen, first of all let me just thank Rona for that introduction and begin by saying that what I'm doing today really is a team effort. I should mention that several ministers really have a role on this. Of course, Rona, as Intergovernmental Affairs Minister, has a role in anything to do with the different levels of government. Minister Lunn is the lead minister on one of the announcements I'll be making today, Minister Baird on the second, and Minister Prentice, as Chair of the Energy and Environment subcommittee of cabinet is involved in all of this, so thank all of you, colleagues, for the work you've done on today's announcement.

It's always a pleasure to be back home in Alberta, and I'm especially pleased to be able to share the podium this afternoon with the new Premier. It's clear from yesterday's Speech from the Throne, Premier, that you intend to continue the tradition of strong, bold political leadership that has served our province so well for over a century. Alberta has long been at the centre of the Canadian petroleum industry, and because of that, Albertans like all Canadians, are concerned about their environment. They appreciate what the energy sector does for the provincial economy and their standard of living. Many came here because of it, and many livelihoods depend on it, yet Albertans also cherish the province's beautiful, varied and unspoiled natural environment. For instance, the ranchers of the southern prairies provide

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careful stewardship for that unique ecosystem. The hikers and skiers treat the vast mountain parks as if they were their own backyard, which in a way, they are. Northerners demand that the conservation of their lakes, rivers and forests come before resource exploitation, and urban dwellers insist that development set aside plenty of room for parkland like your magnificent ribbon of green along the North Saskatchewan here in Edmonton.

Tous les Canadiens veulent un équilibre entre la croissance économique et la protection de l'environnement. Cette équilibre est le défi fondamental de notre époque.

All Canadians are looking for a balance between economic growth and environmental protection. Finding that balance is the fundamental challenge of our time. And it has been a guiding principle for the environmental policies of Canada's new government ever since we took office just over one year ago. It inspired our chemicals management plan, which is making Canada a world leader in the regulation of potentially toxic substances we encounter everyday in our homes and workplaces. It inspired our eco-energy program, which provides incentives to improve energy efficiency and develop alternative, sustainable sources. It inspired our clean air act, which will lay out for the first time ever a national plan for the regulation and control of greenhouse gases and air pollutants across Canada. And it inspired the two important initiatives I'm here to announce today.

La première partie de notre annonce d'aujourd'hui est la formation d'un groupe de travail conjoint entre notre gouvernement et celui de l'Alberta qui étudiera le captage et le stockage du carbone. Au lieu d'émettre des tonnes de dioxyde de carbone dans l'atmosphère, nous pourrions requérir ce produit dans les sables bitumineux, dans les centrales électriques alimentées

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du charbon et auprès d'autres émetteurs industriels, et l'enfouir dans le sol, où il restera pour l'éternité.

Our first announcement is the creation of a joint taskforce of the governments of Canada and Alberta that will investigate the exciting new technology called carbon capture and storage. Instead of pumping tons of carbon dioxide into the earth's atmosphere, we may be able to collect it from our oil sands, our coal-fired electrical plants and other industrial emitters, and pump it deep underground where it will remain for eternity. In the process, we could depressurize depleted oil formations, thereby squeezing the remaining black gold out of the western sedimentary basin. And most exciting of all, if we can perfect this technology, we can use it not only to curb Canada's contribution to greenhouse gas production, but we could also export it around the world. It is only fitting that Alberta is taking the lead in this potentially historic initiative, because it was our late, great Premier, Ernest Manning, who once said, and I quote, that "Albertans are people who dream of changing the world from their tractor seats." This is a dream that could truly change the world. The eco-energy carbon capture and storage taskforce will be chaired by Steve Snyder, president and CEO of TransAlta corporation, the Calgary-based international power generator and marketer. And we'll have a number of prominent Albertans on it and other western Canadians. There are a number of small-scale carbon capture and storage projects already in existence. The taskforce will assess the economic, technical and regulatory hurdles that lie in the road of large-scale implementation of carbon capture and storage. They will report their findings and recommendations by November, and I'm sure people all over the world will be very interested to hear what they have to say.

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La deuxième annonce faite aujourd'hui est celle du fonds Éco-fiducie Canada pour l'Alberta. L'Alberta utilisera sa part de ce fonds de 1,5 milliards \$ pour prendre quatre initiatives sur la qualité de l'air et le changement climatique, incluant les propositions du groupe de travail conjoint sur le captage et le stockage du carbone.

Our second announcement today relates to the Canada Eco-Trust fund. It is a \$1.5 billion pool of capital that is being distributed equitably among all provinces and territories to assist with their clean air and climate change initiatives. Alberta's share of our Eco-Trust fund will be used to support projects like the conversion of municipal waste into electricity in Edmonton, a hydro-carbon upgrading demonstration program, the design for coal-fired electricity generation facilities with near zero emissions and of course proposals coming out of our joint taskforce on carbon capture and storage. The Eco-Trust funding I'm announcing today will be delivered in budget 2007, which as you know will be tabled March the 19<sup>th</sup>. This funding will be available as soon as Parliament approves the budget. Friends, the era of empty rhetoric on the environment is over. We're taking real action that will produce real, tangible results.

Notre gouvernement s'engage à assurer un environnement plus propre et plus sain pour tous les Canadiens, et une économie durable qui assurera un équilibre optimale entre la qualité et le niveau de vie des générations futures.

Our government is committed to a cleaner, healthier environment for all Canadians, and to a sustainable economy that will provide optimal balance between quality of life and standard of living for future generations. Our government is determined to achieve this goal. So is the

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Alberta government under Premier Stelmach, and together that's exactly what we're going to deliver. So thank you. Merci beaucoup. And I'll call on Premier Stelmach. (APPLAUSE)

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