

Muller&Green Analyses PM Trudeau's Canadian Asbestos Policy

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LONDON, LONDON, UK, March 22, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ --

Muller&Green has recently conducted an analysis, highlighting that Canadian government will allegedly spend around \$114 million on a new policy regarding asbestos. The proposal for this policy came out following a promise by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to ban [Canadian asbestos](#) in 2016 while he was running for office.



The Canadian government opened a short window of opportunity for public consultation on a proposed plan to regulate against asbestos and asbestos-related products. That consultation period is, however, due to end on March 22.

The proposed plan, however, faced heavy criticism due to making little distinction between harmful asbestos such as the various amphibole asbestos and chrysotile, and "white asbestos", still used in various products nowadays. This omission is critical for many businesses and industries in Canada, which rely on products containing the non-harmful form of the mineral. The Canada Gazette claimed that "these businesses have generally expressed support for the proposed Regulations", however it is expected that many of these businesses are likely to become obsolete if the plan goes through. The plan claims to be bringing Canada in line with other nations on its stand towards asbestos and the Rotterdam Convention on hazardous materials. However, it fails to note that the Rotterdam Convention does explicitly differentiate between different forms of asbestos, banning all harmful amphibole minerals but not – crucially – chrysotile.

One of the rationales for the proposal is economic, in terms of savings that will be made in health services from reduced cases of asbestos-related diseases. However, regulations and prevention of asbestos-related diseases have been established, contradicting the health argument.

Secondly, the figures provided for the implementation of the plan and the cost to industry and businesses are considered to be relatively low. Moreover, removing [safe asbestos](#) from public buildings could take running costs into the billions.

The planned proposal has also been criticized for its omissions and exceptions, involving mining activities and permitting the use of asbestos in the chlor-alkali industry until 2025.

The plan purports "to protect human health by reducing [asbestos exposure](#) of Canadians, and to meet international obligations." It would appear that human health is not in danger, thanks to adequate regulations already in place and international obligations do not dictate that any

government is expected to regulate against non-harmful substances as laid out by the Rotterdam Convention. According to many, the only danger is potential “waste of public money”.

About Muller and Green:

Muller & Green specializes in research, analysis, consulting, and PR activity for local and global brands.

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