

# **Children's Environmental Health Status Report and Briefing Kit**

DRAFT – April 8/02

Proposal submitted to the Laidlaw Foundation

Submitted by:

The Canadian Environmental Law Association and  
Pollution Probe

Project partners:

Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment  
Canadian Environmental Law Association  
Learning Disabilities Association of Canada  
Pollution Probe  
Toronto Public Health – Health Promotion and Environmental Protection Office

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## **1 Overview**

### **1.1 Project name:**

Children's Environmental Health Status Report and Briefing Kit

### **1.2 Project description**

The purpose of this project is to create a Children's Environmental Health Status Report and Briefing Kit for use in educating Parliamentarians, the news media and the public on Children's Environmental Health issues. The project will:

- Serve as a bridge between recent large research reports and policy initiatives and the concrete questions posed in response to these efforts;
- Research and report on the use, exposure, health concerns and regulatory status of the 20 or 30 pesticides and hazardous substances of greatest concern for children's health;
- Apply a Precautionary Principle lens to the above list and in that light comment on their regulatory status; make recommendations for change including phase-down and/or phase-out options, as necessary, and note available information on safer alternatives;
- Provide, in the above "Status Report," a benchmark to which current and future policy and regulatory action can be compared;
- Consolidate summary materials (with limited preparation of new or revised materials) on children's environmental health issues for inclusion in the Briefing Kit;
- Launch the Status Report and Briefing Kit at a day-long educational event for Parliamentarians in Ottawa in the fall of 2002;
- Post the entire package to the websites of the lead organizations and linked to the Portal website of the Canadian Children's Environmental Health Partnership.

The project will be managed by the Canadian Environmental Law Association in collaboration with Pollution Probe's Ottawa office and with the involvement of member organizations of Canadian Children's Environmental Health Partnership (CCEHP).

### **1.3 Project budget**

\$50,000

### **1.4 Lead applicant:**

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## **2 Background**

### **2.1 Canadian Children's Environmental Health Partnership (CCEHP)**

Working across traditional boundaries, the Canadian Children's Environmental Health Partnership (CCEHP) provides common ground for organizations working to improve the environmental health of our children. Composed of ten organizations ranging from environmental NGOs to healthcare service providers to child care advocates, the partnership aims to:

- Move children's environmental health issues into the minds of decision-makers both on the front lines and at the policy level;
- Promote children's environmental health amongst caregivers and the public;
- Coordinate activities and create efficiencies amongst the partners.

The partnership provides its members with a platform for joint projects, networking and information sharing. CCEHP projects take the form of 'constellations' time limited initiatives made up of a subset of CCEHP members.

Founded in 2001, CCEHP has just completed its initial development phase. As it moves into its first full year of operations, the partnership is getting down to the business of practical collaboration and the development of projects. Priority projects for year one include:

- Cosmetic Pesticides and Children's Health constellation;
- Voluntary Sector Initiative Children's Health Policy constellation;
- Children's Environmental Health Status Report and Briefing Kit constellation;
- Children's Environmental Health Portal web site;
- Everyday Sources of Lead Exposure constellation.

Year one will also see the establishment of a CCEHP secretariat, a body charged with the facilitation and coordination of activities amongst the partners. Additional constellations are in the conceptual stage and planned for roll-out in year two.

This proposal is related to the Children's Environmental Health Status Report and Briefing Kit constellation.

### **2.2 Canadian Environmental Law Association**

The Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) is a non-profit, public interest organization founded in 1970. CELA is an environmental law clinic – within Legal Aid Ontario - dedicated to providing legal services to low income people and disadvantaged communities, and advancing the cause of strong environmental protection through advocacy, education and law reform. In addition to providing direct legal representation and summary advice, CELA's law reform and public educational mandates include advocacy on ensuring access to environmental justice and protecting public environmental rights. This work occurs at the provincial, national and international level. Three strategic campaign areas have been chosen via organizational strategic planning and, although part of the Legal Aid Ontario mandate, these areas are enhanced through funding from additional sources of revenue. CELA's strategic campaigns include the areas of Environment and Health, Water, and Globalization and the Environment.

Within the area of Environment and Health, CELA's Children's Health Project is entering a fourth year of productive collaboration with physicians and other environment-focused health organizations. The *Children's Health Project* initial collaboration with the Ontario College of Family Physicians Environmental Health Committee has expanded to include a wide range of organizations working on environment and health issues related to children including pending completion of the development phase to create the Canadian Children's Environmental Health Partnership.

### 2.3 Project partners

CELA and Pollution Probe's Ottawa Office will be the lead partners on this project. A sub-set of CCEHP member organizations will also be participating. The full group of project partners includes:

- Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment - [www.cape.ca](http://www.cape.ca)
- Canadian Environmental Law Association - [www.cela.ca](http://www.cela.ca)
- Learning Disabilities Association of Canada - [www.ldac-taac.ca](http://www.ldac-taac.ca)
- South Riverdale Community Health Centre
- Pollution Probe - [www.pollutionprobe.org](http://www.pollutionprobe.org)
- Toronto Public Health – Health Promotion and Environmental Protection Office - [www.city.toronto.on.ca/health](http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/health)

The partner organizations will be contributing their in-house expertise and/or published reports on children's environmental health issues as input and advice to the research and summary writing efforts to be undertaken by the two project lead organizations.

### 2.4 Children's Environmental Health Research, Policy and Legal Developments

Over the past ten years the field of children's environmental health has grown exponentially. Our understanding about the greater exposure and sensitivity of children to environmental contaminants has come from an extensive array of scientific journals, comprehensive reports and policy and legislative responses. This effort has been most profound in the United States.

It is fair to say that a driving force behind bringing children's environmental health issues to the fore has been the activities of non-governmental organizations and especially where these organizations have teamed up with environmentally-concerned physicians and others in the health care field.

In Canada, the report from the above-noted *Children's Health Project* took a uniquely Canadian look at these issues and made a detailed set of recommendations for the children's health research and educational agenda as well as numerous policy and legal changes. Additional reports were simultaneously or subsequently published about Children's Environmental Health issues or which included the special considerations of children in the context of health- or policy-related investigations. These efforts have contributed to a wide range of ongoing policy and law reform efforts, two of which are noted here.

First, in May of 2001, after a three-year effort, over 115 countries from around the world, including Canada, signed the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

Canada was also the first country to ratify the Convention thus confirming a commitment to implementation.<sup>1</sup>

Second, after a wait of nearly ten years, and in response to pressure from member organizations of the CCEHP and many others, the Canadian government recently introduced Bill C-53 to amend the *Pest Control Products Act*. The proposed law places particular focus on children's health and deserves careful scrutiny during the next several months of opportunity for public input and debate.

Implementation of the POPs Treaty and improvements to, passage of, and implementation of new pesticides legislation could go a long way towards reducing environmental risks to Canadian children.

The POPs Treaty and Bill C-53 are two federal policy areas with which Parliamentarians and the concerned Canadian public will be engaged in the coming months and years. The Status report envisioned in this proposal is intended to take this slice of the children's health policy agenda and provide a benchmark to which implementation measures can be compared.

By providing very practical information about specific chemicals, the Status Report proposed in this project will be able to answer the questions that arise from our earlier work. For example, in response to larger reports that address entire classes of substances or pesticides, questions that arise are very specific and not well answered in these large reports. Which are the worst substances? For each substance, what products are they found in? How much exposure occurs? What are the potential health effects? Have children's health effects been considered in setting legal limits? What are the current legal limits? Should the legal limits be stricter, if so, by how much? Should the substances be banned? What are the alternatives? These are the kinds of questions that the Status Report will answer about a specific list of chemicals that are of greatest concern and which deserve the immediate attention of policy-makers and the public.

The Status Report takes a particular but certainly not an exclusive focus on pesticides for three reasons. As noted, the two important policy measures noted above deserve the kind of scrutiny and ongoing review and comparison to a clear benchmark that the Status Report will provide. Second, the list of chemicals included in the POPs Treaty is dominated by pesticides. Third, the increasingly large body of information about risks to children from environmental contaminants has been dominated as well by concerns about pesticides.

Fact sheets will accompany the Status Report in the Briefing Kit and place it in the context of the broader field of Children's Environmental Health issues.

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<sup>1</sup> POPs are highly toxic substances (including some pesticides, industrial chemicals and by-products, including dioxins and furans) which can persist and travel long distances in the environment, accumulate up the food chain, and may affect the developmental and endocrine systems of many species including human children.

### 3 Project goals

The overall goals of this project are to bring the issue of children's environmental health to Parliamentarians, the news media and the public in a manner that facilitates understanding of complex issues, focuses attention on the most urgent priorities, and provides clear goals from which further progress can be measured. The following is an elaboration of these goals.

#### 3.1 Summarize and focus the information about Children's Environmental Health

There is a wide range of detailed and summary information about children's environmental health issues that can be used directly and also be summarized for inclusion in the Status Report and Briefing Kit. Very little new writing will be necessary; hence the workplan anticipates application of skilled editorial review to compile and reformat existing information to fit within a comprehensive kit. Summary materials are necessary to scope out the full range of issues and to place those of immediate or urgent concern in context. Content for the Briefing Kit should include:

- **Fact sheets** summarizing:
  - why children are more exposed and more sensitive to environmental contaminants;
  - overall trends and key areas requiring further research;
  - risk assessment and risk management;
  - cumulative and aggregate risk assessments;
  - children's health test battery (as in the US Children's Health Testing Program);
  - the precautionary principle;
  - major contaminants, substances or products of concern (summarized from the Status Report) and how they should be controlled;
  - Contact information for individuals, organizations, websites, etc. that can provide further information;
- **Status Report** on 20 or 30 pesticides or hazardous substances of particular concern to children's health;
- **Presentations** made as part of a one-day event to present the Status Report and Briefing Kit to Parliamentarians;
- **Background materials** – published reports, journals, etc., that complement the summary materials and provide more information for those interested or their research staff.

This information package will provide three levels of information. The first will include the basic set of fact sheets to summarize all of the major issues. A greater level of detail will be provided in the Status Report to assist with focusing current discussions (on the day of the Parliament Hill event) and to measure against future efforts. Third, background materials, along with reference materials and contact information, will provide greater detail for those who need it.

#### 3.2 Status Report on the most urgent priorities to prevent harm to children

The Status Report will provide a both a bridge and focal point. It will bridge the gap between the detailed reports on children's environmental health and the specific questions that are generated by these reports. As noted above regarding the background to this proposal, awareness about children's environmental health risks gives rise to very specific questions that are not answered in reports that address entire classes of substances or pesticides. The Status Report will:

- focus attention on a short list of 20 or 30 specific pesticides or hazardous substances of particular concern to children and requiring specific attention by federal regulatory agencies;
- explain the rationale for choosing the sub-set of 20 or 30 substances placing the list in the broader context of environmental concerns for children's health;
- for each of the substances identified, provide answers to common questions about exposure, immediate and long term health concerns (and uncertainties), and regulatory status, including whether regulatory review adequately accounted for children;
- apply a Precautionary Principle lens to each of the substances of concern and indicate whether current or proposed regulatory responses meet this test.
- Provide information on safer alternatives to the substances of concern.

### 3.3 Provide a clear set of goals beside which further actions may be measured

The Briefing Kit will provide an accessible educational package to focus presentations and discussions at the one-day educational event for Parliamentarians. By making it available on-line, it will be useful to the news media and the public. Materials will be written to provide a longer shelf life than the single day event.

In particular, the Status Report will provide a benchmark to frame current discussions and measure progress. Those substances likely to be covered in the Status Report would include substances included in the following federal government or Canada-wide initiatives:

- The POPs Treaty
- Bill C-53, the proposed revision to the federal *Pest Control Products Act*
- Re-evaluation of pesticides currently in commercial use
- The Strategic Options Process under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*;
- Canada-Wide Standards prepared by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment

The final two bullets above are processes scheduled for revision. A new evaluation process for substances found to be "toxic" under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* is in preparation. Similarly, the work of the CCME on Canada-Wide Standards is to be scoped significantly due to large budget cuts. Both of these developments additionally support the need for a Status Report.



## 4 Approach

The preparation of the Status Report and Briefing Kit is anticipated to take approximately five to six months. Publication will occur on-line simultaneously with an evening public forum and day-long educational event for Parliamentarians and the news media in Ottawa.

### 4.1 Consolidation of existing educational materials and revision/editing for fact sheets

The Briefing Kit fact sheets and associated background materials will be prepared through the consolidation, editing and reformatting of existing educational materials and analytical reports already prepared or in preparation among the lead organizations as well as among the members of the CCEHP. Emphasis will be placed on brevity and clarity. Both content and appearance will benefit from the advice and editorial participation of an experienced communications consultant. Expert reviewers in medicine, public health, law and policy will be involved throughout the editorial process.

### 4.2 Research and preparation of the Status Report

The Status Report will require the combined effort of the two lead organizations, with advice from the partners and other experts, to make strategic choices on the list of substances on which to focus. The researchers on the project will compile a draft list of the Status Report substances by reviewing and choosing among existing lists of "priority" substances including, for example, those compiled by:

- The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment
- The North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation
- The International Joint Commission
- The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
- The CEPA Priority Substances List
- California's Proposition 65 (requires reporting on developmental toxicants)

The researchers will prepare a draft strategy for the approach to take in the Status Report and convene a meeting of senior research and legal staff of the two lead organizations and representatives from the partner organizations. Other expert input may also be considered, as necessary or advisable, on the recommendation of those initially involved.

The Status Report will then be researched and written by the lead organizations. As noted above, with respect to the Briefing Kit, the Status Report will be guided by the editorial review of experts in medicine, public health, law and communications.

### 4.3 On-line and Public Launch in Ottawa

In coordination with the CCEHP website project, the Status Report and Briefing Kit will be launched on-line simultaneously with a "paper" launch and public educational event in Ottawa. Print and on-line production will be done by an experience designer and with the advice of the Communications Consultant. The model for the public launch event is similar to the highly successful *Eco-Summit* co-hosted by environmental and health organizations and Members of Parliament.

The event would include an evening public forum with a panel of speakers followed on the next day by a series of formal and informal sessions on Parliament Hill including the options of a

“newsmaker breakfast,” a drop-in session for M.P.s, Senators, political staff, etc., to be held in advance of Question Period and in a nearby location. Exact details of how to structure the event will be determined by the participating organizations. The Communications Consultant will also advise on and be involved in organizing the event and will be responsible for sub-contracting event coordination tasks.

## 5 Workplan

Pending successful receipt of funding, it is anticipated this project could run from mid-June to late November. Recognizing the difficulty of summer meetings and working around holiday schedules, it is expected that the summer months can accommodate initial meetings and the finalizing of overall strategic decisions on approach and content of materials. Thereafter, the bulk of the work would likely have to occur in the fall months of 2002. The following list of tasks follows these general expectations and is arranged in rough chronological order. Bracketed acronyms denote activities to be undertaken by project partners and hired consultants as follows:

CELA – Canadian Environmental Law Association

PP – Pollution Probe

CAPE – Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment

LDAC – Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

HP&EPO – City of Toronto Health Promotion and Environmental Protection Office

CC – Communications Consultant

- Initial meeting of researchers to 1) map out overall Briefing Kit contents and 2) prepare draft of strategic approach and content outline for Status Report (CELA and PP)
- Meeting of senior research and legal staff of lead organizations with CCEHP partners and advisors to 1) finalize approach and content of Status Report, 2) advise on Briefing Kit and 3) advise on fall event (CELA, PP, CAPE, LDAC, HP&EPO, and additional invitees as determined by researchers on advice of colleagues)
- Researchers to develop detailed outline of Status Report incorporating advisors input (CELA and PP)
- Researchers to meet with Communications Consultant to seek advice on overall content and approach for all print and on-line materials and to map out fall event (CELA, PP, CC)
- Decide on presenters for fall event and schedule inclusion of powerpoint presentations into Briefing Kit
- Communications Coordinator to sub-contract event coordination and maintain ongoing liaison with project lead organizations (CELA, PP, CC)
- Researchers to prepare fact sheets (CELA and PP)
- Review of fact sheets by medical, public health, legal and communications advisors (CELA, CAPE, LDAC, HP&EPO, CC)
- Researchers to research and write Status Report (CELA and PP)
- Review of Status Report by medical, public health, legal and communications advisors (CELA, PP, CAPE, LDAC, HP&EPO, CC)
- Iterative revisions of fact sheets and Status Report by researchers and communications advisor (CELA, PP, CC)
- Meeting of researchers and project partners to sign off on Briefing Kit and Status report and confirm and coordinate details of Ottawa event
- Consolidate Briefing Kit and Status Report and send to production (CELA, PP, CC)
- Finalize details of event coordination
- Coordinate Ottawa event with on-line launch of materials on CCEHP portal website
- Launch with evening public forum and day-long educational and media event on Parliament Hill
- Report to funder

## 6 Budget

The same acronyms are used in the following budget to denote project participants. SR refers to Status Report and BK to Briefing Kit

Item	Laidlaw Request	Notes
<b>Staff and consulting – SR, BK and fall launch</b>		
CELA – researcher and project manager (BK, SR and fall launch)	\$8,000	Researcher and project manager – 20 days @ \$400/day
CELA – legal research and advisors (BK and SR and fall launch)	\$4,800	Legal Counsel – 8 days @ \$600/day
PP – Researcher (BK, SR and fall launch)	\$5,000	Researcher – 10 days @ \$500/day
PP – Desktop print and on-line production (BK and SR)	\$2,500	Production designer – 5 days @ \$500/day
CAPE – Physician advisor and presenter at fall launch (BK, SR and fall launch)	\$3,000	Physician – 6 days @ \$500/day
LDAC – Health policy advisor (BK, SR and fall launch)	\$2,000	Advisor – 4 days @ \$500/day
CC – Communications advisor (BK, SR and fall launch)	\$4,250	Communication and editorial advice – 5 days @ \$425/day and Communication and strategic advice for fall launch – 5 days @ \$425/day
CC – sub-contract for event coordination (fall launch)	\$1,250	Event coordinator – 5 days @ \$250/day
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>\$30,800</b>	
<b>Other costs</b>		
Travel	\$3,000	Assumes approx. 17 (calculated from workplan) round trip train fare between Ottawa and Toronto
Accommodation	\$2,600	Assumes approximately 17 overnight accommodation in either Ottawa or Toronto
Print production of BK and SR	\$5,000	Total guess – need help here
Meeting hospitality and facilitation	\$1,100	Another guess
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>\$11,700</b>	
<b>PROJECT SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>\$42,500</b>	
<b>Overhead/Administration</b>		
Overhead/admin including office space (15%)	\$7,500	
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>	
<b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	