



# ***News Release***

**Susan Kadis, M.P., Thornhill**

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Opposition Day Notes – Kyoto Protocol  
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Thank you Mr. Speaker

I rise today proudly representing my constituents in Thornhill, who wish to make their voices heard on this compelling issue of our time. The residents of Thornhill want a sustainable environment, one where they can breathe clean air, where their children can grow up healthy, live long lives, and ensure that their children's children will have a healthy planet they can call their home. Like many of my constituents, I am deeply concerned that our environment is deteriorating at a rapid rate right before our very eyes under this current minority Conservative government. By not charting a course that will put Canada in the lead, they are abandoning our environment, the need to combat climate change and map out a strategy for the transition to clean energy putting our future well-being and prosperity in jeopardy.

There is worldwide recognition backed-up with concrete scientific evidence that the climate is changing at a rapid rate as a result of human causes requiring man-made solutions. This is a global, borderless problem. The IPCC report which is due to be released tomorrow in Paris states the “the warming of the climate system is unequivocal”. A solution will require the efforts of all citizens of the globe and all countries to play their part. And this can only be done with strong leadership and multilateral action. Canada has an absolute obligation to future generations and to all citizens of this planet to make the fight against global warming a top priority. Canadians are feeling the effects of climate change already, as “Extreme Weather” has become the phrase of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as each summer gets hotter and the number of severe storms and floods increase. Global warming is a real and serious threat to our planet which cannot be ignored. The Conservative government, whose role is to work on behalf of Canadians, cannot afford to abandon Canada’s commitment to the Kyoto Protocol. What I do not understand, Mr. Speaker, is that with this knowledge, why does this Conservative government have its head stuck in the sand which has cost Canadians one year of progress on this most pressing issue. Under programs set in place by our former Liberal government, we already had a “made in Canada” approach and a plan to ensure that future generations

would enjoy clean air, clean water, clean land and clean energy. Project Green, the Climate Fund, the Partnership Fund and the Energuide program were all made in Canada. We had a progressive, collaborative, multilateral approach to achieve our goals and work towards meeting our commitments to the Kyoto Protocol. The former Liberal Government signed on to Kyoto as a partner in a global commitment to take action on global warming and the environment. How can Canadians trust a Prime Minister to take charge on the environment when this very Prime Minister has said that the science of climate change is “tentative and contradictory” and who ridiculed the Kyoto Accord as nothing more than a “socialist scheme” and “an environmental fraud.” It is comments like these that make this House and in fact many Canadians seriously question the credibility of any plan or hastily put together announcement put forward by this government on the environment.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that this government get its environmental policy out of reverse and put us back into first gear and reconfirm Canada’s commitment to Kyoto. The Clean Air Act has done nothing except undermine Canada’s long standing commitment to protecting the environment. This Act allows for greenhouse gas emissions to rise until

2025, delaying action for decades, decades in which a firm commitment and action on environmental protection is critical to our planet and to our future generations.

Not only has this Conservative government called into question Canada's commitment to the environment on the world stage and caused international embarrassment with its isolationist approach. It has cut important federal partnerships with the provinces and territories increasingly narrowing our capacity to lead and diminishing our national potential. Last year, the Prime Minister refused to honour a \$538-million agreement between governments of Canada and Ontario to shut down coal-fired electricity production plants. Further, this minority government refused to honour commitments in the Partnership Fund to fund climate change programs undertaken by provinces and municipalities, for example, resulting in a \$328 million loss to the province of Quebec alone for its Kyoto plan. The provinces want to affect change in the environment, and so do Canadians. Mr. Speaker, why is this Prime Minister ignoring these clarion calls, and sending successful programs to the cutting room floor? The proof is loud and clear in the Conservatives' swift actions to arbitrarily gut 92% of program funding for climate change programs based on ideological beliefs not in what is in the best interest of Canadians.

They have cancelled and shut down successful climate change programs in Canada like the One Tonne Challenge, Energuide, Wind Power Production Incentive and the Renewable Power Production Incentive. And then, they turn around one year later and re-introduce many of the same programs, watered down and wrapped in a big blue ribbon and try to pass it off as their own initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I know first hand that the residents of Thornhill do not need to be woken up by polls to the importance and urgent need to take steps to protect the environment. I have met with, received letters and e-mails from Thornhill residents of all ages, professions and backgrounds. The message is clear and consistent that. We need a federal government who will be responsible on climate change and the environment and not sit on the sidelines and that Canada needs to be at the table internationally. They also want to know what they can do. The way they see it is – the more we can do now, the more their children and grandchildren will benefit down the road. My constituents want a federal government who will take steps to protect their health, their safety, and their infrastructure, the fate of all which rests squarely on a sustainable environment. Thornhill residents value our quality of life like all Canadians. They want a more energy efficient and sustainable

economy that will provide a better quality of life for themselves and for generations to come.

The previous government under the leadership of the Liberals set in place a multifaceted foundation – a base with one mission: to combat the damage done and prevent future damage from occurring through education, conservation and refocusing our need for energy through the development of renewable and clean energy sources and innovative new technology. The One Tonne Challenge provided funding to grassroots organizations in their efforts to educate and engage Canadians to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as launch a national educational campaign to make Canadians more aware of our energy use and habits and encourage conservation. In total, the previous Liberal government committed \$4 billion in the 2005 budget for its Climate Change plan, which included expanding the One Tonne Challenge. Programs like the Energuide for Houses Retrofit and the Energuide for Low-Income Households were exactly the positive, cost-effective, “made in Canada” energy efficiency programs the Conservatives endorsed in the last campaign. On hearing of the cancellation of these programs, the Regional Municipality of York Region immediately passed a motion outlining the detrimental effect this

decision would have in our community and requested the Federal Government re-consider its decision. Particularly for low-income households who have been struggling with the 60% rise in home energy prices between 1992 and 2005, this program achieved two important goals – conservation and real savings to Canadians who need it most. These programs were oversubscribed. The Liberals set in place a program that was well received and that was engaging Canadians who want to contribute and be part of the solution to preserve our natural environment and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and offered the opportunity to save their hard earned money by reducing their energy bills. There is no logic in systematically dismantling programs and then resurrecting them a year later when they realize that the horse has left the barn and they need to quickly show some action.

The issue of climate change, as I've said is a borderless issue, one where strong leadership and a will for collective responsibility is a prerequisite to making progress on climate change. The Conservative government with their ill-conceived Clean Air Act is abrogating its responsibility, just as they have demonstrated with their short-sighted cuts to literacy and women's

programs. It illustrates a complete disconnect between them and the needs of Canadians.

We must fully honour our commitment to Kyoto.

The liberals have laid the groundwork and now, we must move forward. We must re-join the battle on climate change and return to Kyoto. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and cleaning up our global environment with our international partners is critical to the future of our planet. Instead of playing politics and focusing their attack on the opposition, this government should be attacking the issue.

There is no silver bullet, there is no single policy or program that will immediately solve the challenges that we face in protecting our environment. But we need to take sweeping action now. We must be fully committed partners and take action on all fronts – developing energy efficiency, encouraging and supporting innovation and renewable energy sources, so that we and future generations can enjoy clean air, clean water, and clean land.

We are global citizens, and we must not turn our backs on our responsibility. Canada needs to re-commit to fully honouring the principles and targets of

the Kyoto Protocol in their entirety and the government must create and publish a credible plan to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions to meet Canada's Kyoto commitment. Thank you Mr. Speaker.