

(Translation into English)

THE REGIONAL DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC HEALTH STATE THE FAILURE OF THE SAFE USE OF ASBESTOS CHRYSOTILE

Media release

QUEBEC CITY, March 31, 2011 / CNW Telbec / - In the context of an application for a loan guarantee from the Quebec government to revive the Jeffrey mine in Asbestos, the Regional Director of Public Health for the National Capital region, Dr. François Desbiens, added his voice to the directors of Public Health (DSP) of the other 17 health regions of Quebec to voice their concerns about the impact on the health of the population from the presence and increased use of chrysotile asbestos in Quebec.

The impact on health should be considered in the decision that the Quebec government, which is responsible for the final decision, will take.

In January, the DSP 18 sent a letter to the minister responsible, Mr. Gignac, minister of the Department of Economic Development, Innovation and Export Trade (MDEIE), stressing the importance of considering the impact on the health of people in making his decision.

The concerns of the DSP are based, among other things, on the scientific production published by the National Institute of Public Health (INSPQ). Mandated by the Department of Health and Social Services to monitor exposure to asbestos and the diseases that are linked to asbestos in the Quebec population and among workers, the INSPQ shows that there are significant difficulties in implementing the required safe use measures.

Recommendations

Given that:

- The chrysotile asbestos is a proven carcinogen in humans with no known safe level;
- The unsafe use of chrysotile asbestos was found in workplaces where it is known to be present, despite the standards and laws;
- The protection measures cannot be taken with regard to all exposure to risk as the traceability of the product is not updated;

The Directors of Public Health are of the opinion that the increase in operation and use of chrysotile asbestos in Quebec will result in an increase in asbestos-related diseases among workers and the general population resulting in social and financial costs, which must be taken into consideration in the analysis of the issue of whether to revive the operation of the last two asbestos mines in Canada.

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