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Sierra Club of Canada News Release

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

National Environmental Groups Release Federal Budget Proposals

Plan would cut environmentally wasteful government spending

OTTAWA - As the Liberal government prepares its upcoming Speech from the Throne and federal budget, the Green Budget Coalition today released its package of budget proposals. The plan encourages the government to cut millions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies that harm the environment and invest in Canada's environmental health.

"The federal budget is the single most important environmental policy statement made by the government on an annual basis," said Julie Gelfand, Chair of the Green Budget Coalition and President of the Canadian Nature Federation. "If Paul Martin is serious about reining in wasteful government spending, he should start with the millions of dollars in handouts that subsidize the poisoning of our air and water."

Recent studies have shown that the quality of Canada's environment is in decline, which has threatened Canadians' health and economic competitiveness. It has been conservatively estimated, for example, that air pollution annually kills 1,900 people prematurely and causes 47 million minor illness days in Ontario alone, and results in \$1 billion in lost revenue as a result of costs to the health care system and worker absenteeism.

The Green Budget plan, Recommendations for Budget 2004, promotes an investment that would clean up toxic sites, increase the number and size of protected wildlife areas and enable Canada to meet its commitment to implement the Kyoto Protocol on climate change.

"The government must tackle the 'environmental deficit' with the same focus and determination the Prime Minister showed as Minister of Finance. The costs associated with deteriorating environmental health are rising, while the strategic opportunities to protect the environment and meet our international obligations, if not acted upon soon, could be lost forever," said Elizabeth May, Executive Director of the Sierra Club of Canada.

The Green Budget Coalition's recommendations to cut wasteful and environmentally destructive government spending include subsidies that encourage the use of chemical pesticides, and others that benefit the nuclear, mining, oil and gas industries.

"If these industries are as competitive as their proponents say they are, why do taxpayers have to keep giving them handouts?" asked Pierre Sadik, Manager of the Green Budget Coalition. The Coalition advocates redirecting these subsidies to renewable and environmentally sound alternatives.

The Green Budget Coalition is comprised of 18 of Canada's leading environmental and conservation organizations.

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Recommendations for Budget 2004 is available at: www.greenbudget.ca

For more information, contact:

Julie Gelfand, President of the Canadian Nature Federation (613) 562-3447 x231
Karen Wristen, Exec. Director Canadian Arctic Resources Committee (613) 292-8037
Elizabeth May, Executive Director of the Sierra Club of Canada (613) 241-4611
Matthew Bramley, Director Climate Change of Pembina Institute (613) 235-6288 x26

This is Exhibit ^c referred to in the affidavit of Stephen Hazell sworn before me, this 4th day of January 2004

MB
A COMMISSIONER FOR TAKING AFFIDAVITS

Pierre Sadik, Manager of the Green Budget Coalition (613) 562-3447 x236

Sierra Club of Canada National Office

info@sierraclub.ca

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