

Minister of Health Tony Clement Rejects Trans Fat Task Force Recommendations

OTTAWA (June 20, 2007) — Bill Jeffery, LLB, national coordinator of the Centre for Science in the Public Interest and a member of the Trans Fat Task Force, issued the following comment on Minister Clement's response to the June 2006 Trans Fat Task Force report.

Since the Trans Fat Task Force called for regulatory limits on industrial trans fat in foods in June 2006, at least 2,000 Canadians have died from trans-fat induced heart attacks. Yet, Minister Clement gave the entire food industry a two-year free-pass for voluntary action and says he will let all companies off the hook completely if, by June 2009, only 75% of certain products comply with the limits proposed by the Task Force. Minister Clement's long inaction and flimsy standards for corporate responsibility pay a king's ransom for the government's relations with food companies.

I am encouraged that some food manufacturers and restaurants have switched to healthier oils, but average trans fat intake in Canada remains at least two-and-half times the amount the World Health Organization considers safe. And some Canadians consume much more, including many who dine at restaurants, which aren't required to post any nutrition information on menus. Soon after the federal government first urged the food industry to limit its use of trans in 1990, Canadian intake rose to among the highest levels in the world. Recent reductions in the use of partially hydrogenated vegetable oil by some food companies were likely prompted, in part, by a real threat of regulation since an October 2004 vote in Parliament forced the government of the day to launch the Task Force's 18-month study, itself reaffirmed in March 2007 by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health.

Note to Editors: Bill Jeffery is one of 23 members of the Trans Fat Task Force. While the Task Force Report was unanimous, the above Statement does not necessarily reflect the views of all Task Force members.

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The Centre for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) is an independent health advocacy organization with offices in Washington, Dallas, and Ottawa. CSPI's advocacy efforts are supported by more than 100,000 subscribers to the Canadian edition of its *Nutrition Action Healthletter*. CSPI does not accept industry or government funding and *Nutrition Action* does not carry advertisements.