



MEDIA RELEASE

Montreal's Deadly Heat Wave a Taste of the Future without Action - July 7, 2018

Montreal's public health department has reported that 33 people have died so far from a 7-day heat wave that hit southern Ontario and Quebec. The people who have died were older people; people with mental or physical health problems; people without air conditioning.

"Temperatures above 30 degrees C can be harmful to all of us but certain groups – the elderly, young children, pregnant women, and people with chronic diseases -- are most sensitive to extreme heat" offered **Dr. Jean Zigby**, Past President of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) and a Palliative Care Physician at the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal. "But those who live on low incomes – those who don't have access to air conditioning, pools, or cool spaces – are most vulnerable particularly when a heat wave is prolonged as it has been this week."

This is not an anomaly but a sign of things to come for Canada. A new [Climate Atlas of Canada](#) reports that the City of Montreal can expect many more heat waves in the future as a result of climate change. Before 2005, Montreal had, on average, 8 days per year with temperatures over 30 degrees C. With climate change, it is predicted that Montreal will experience more than 50 days per year with extreme temperatures by 2050. In fact, this is a global phenomenon. The 2017 Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change found that an additional 125 million vulnerable people were exposed to intense heatwaves from 2000 to 2016.

"This is another wake up call for us" said CAPE Executive Director, **Kim Perrotta** who lives in Ontario. "We need to prepare our communities for the climate change that is coming with adaptation plans that protect the health of Canadians. But more importantly, we need to take dramatic steps to reduce climate emissions as quickly as possible to slow climate change."

"We have to connect the dots" explains, **Dr. Larry Barzelai**, a CAPE board member from BC. "We need to recognize how our policies and actions contribute to climate. We are promoting natural gas in BC, diluted bitumen in Alberta, and dismantling a cap and trade program in Ontario. We are running out of time to save the planet for our children."

"We have the climate solutions we require," offers CAPE President, **Dr. Courtney Howard**. "In fact, many lower carbon alternatives provide immediate health benefits and significant health care savings. When we trade in coal plants for solar panels, or choose to cycle instead of drive, we eliminate air pollution as well as greenhouse gases, which reduces asthma exacerbations and cancer. We are already transforming our society into one that feels better. But we must do it faster."

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