

Canadian Health Coalition

Coalition canadienne de la santé

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Le 28 janvier 2004

Lettre ouverte au Paul Martin, Premier ministre

Monsieur le Premier ministre,

Nous vous écrivons pour vous faire part de nos grandes inquiétudes au sujet du projet de votre gouvernement de remplacer la Loi sur les aliments et drogues du Canada par un nouveau régime législatif de protection de la santé.

Nous avons pris note d'une série de changements annoncés par votre nouveau gouvernement visant à refléter votre engagement à bâtir une " économie du 21e siècle ". Un élément clef semble être la reconception de l'approche fédérale en matière de déréglementation de la santé et de la sécurité afin de créer un " avantage " pour l'industrie en adoptant des normes de sécurité plus faibles.

Nous sommes particulièrement inquiets des propositions de Santé Canada qui visent a) à abandonner le principe de précaution en faveur d'un régime étroit de risque-avantage; b) à transférer le fardeau de la preuve de l'industrie à la population - les produits sont censés être sûrs à moins qu'on ne prouve qu'ils sont dommageables; c) à accélérer le processus d'approbation des médicaments; et d) à permettre la publicité directe au consommateur des médicaments d'ordonnance. Si le gouvernement renonce à son devoir de soins en matière de protection de la santé, le système canadien de soins de santé ne pourra pas composer avec les résultats négatifs sur la santé. C'est aussi toute la communauté internationale qui ressentirait les effets négatifs des changements proposés à la réglementation.

Les sociétés ont à la fois besoin de fonctions commerciales et de fonctions de surveillance. Mais ces deux formes de travail sont contradictoires et favorisent la corruption si elles s'écartent des barrières morales ou fonctionnelles. Quand les gouvernements du Canada incluent les objectifs de commerce aux objectifs de l'industrie, comme la déréglementation, l'autoréglementation et la privatisation, dans les tâches de protection de la santé, des gens perdent la vie.

Ce sont là les leçons douloureuses apprises à la suite du désastre du sang contaminé, de la contamination de l'eau potable, des réactions négatives aux médicaments et des agents pathogènes mortels dans les aliments. Le Canada n'a rien appris de la crise de la vache folle au Royaume-Uni. Les fonctions de promotion de la sécurité alimentaire et de la promotion des aliments ne doivent pas être logées à la même enseigne que l'organisme gouvernementale. Le responsable de la réglementation fédérale peut avoir contribué, à court terme, à l'économie de l'industrie bovine canadienne en n'adoptant pas les mesures de précaution pour empêcher la maladie de la vache folle de se propager. Mais à long terme, ce manque d'attention sur le plan de la sécurité coûtera beaucoup plus cher à l'industrie.

L'objectif d'une législation en matière de protection de la santé vise à sauvegarder la santé et la sécurité non pas le commerce et l'investissement. Le gouvernement ne peut adopter de règlement pour protéger la santé et l'environnement, comme les lois du Canada l'exigent présentement, s'il couche avec les industries qu'il réglemente. Un organisme de réglementation de la santé et de la sécurité qui place l'autoréglementation de l'industrie pour le profit (" la réglementation intelligente ") avant la protection de la santé publique n'agit pas de manière morale, sage ou légale. De manière similaire, la publicité directe au consommateur pour les médicaments d'ordonnance n'a qu'un seul but : promouvoir la vente des produits. Pour quelle raison le gouvernement fédéral introduirait-il sciemment une politique visant à miner la viabilité de ses services de santé?

Quel genre de société bâtit une " économie pour le 21e siècle " en exposant les personnes qui sont le moins capables de se défendre, comme les enfants et les générations futures, à des risques incontrôlables et à des risques inconnus?

Ce n'est pas le genre de Canada que la population canadienne veut. Ce n'est pas le genre de Canada que le monde souhaite avoir. Cette politique ne mettra pas seulement les Canadiennes et Canadiens à risque, elle détruira la réputation internationale du Canada. Le résultat ultime sera que les produits canadiens seront considérés comme " dangereux ".

Par conséquent, nous vous prions d'instruire votre Ministre de la santé de prendre les mesures suivantes :

- 1. Adopter le principe de précaution comme fondement d'une évaluation des risques large, transparente et indépendante pour protéger les personnes qui sont le moins aptes à se défendre contre les dangers pour la santé, les enfants et les générations futures en particulier.**
- 2. Mettre fin au " renouvellement législatif en matière de protection de la santé " et maintenir le " devoir de diligence " dans la Loi sur les aliments et drogues.**
- 3. Rétablir le fardeau de la preuve pour l'industrie afin qu'elle démontre la sécurité de ses produits ou de sa technologie avant qu'une approbation ne soit donnée.**
- 4. Permettre le plein accès public à l'information sur laquelle les responsables de la réglementation fédérale se basent pour approuver un produit ou une technologie.**
- 5. Appliquer rigoureusement l'interdiction sur la publicité directe aux consommateurs pour les médicaments d'ordonnance.**
- 6. Mettre fin à tous les partenariats et aux activités promotionnelles afin que les organismes de réglementation ne réglementent que dans l'intérêt public et non pas dans l'intérêt des organismes réglementés.**

Monsieur le Premier ministre, nous vous demandons de faire preuve de leadership moral pour le 21e siècle afin que les intérêts économiques puissants ne puissent éclipser la protection de la santé pour la population canadienne et le monde. Comme le Groupe de travail de la Société royale du Canada sur les aliments génétiquement modifiés l'a dit, il est préférable de faire erreur du côté de la protection de la sécurité humaine et environnementale que de faire erreur du côté des risques.

Je vous prie d'agréer l'expression de mes sentiments distingués.

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Open Letter to Prime Minister Paul Martin

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Helen Ryane, Management Consultant
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