

FOSSIL OF THE DAY AWARD

Media Release

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New Zealand Earns First Place Fossil, United States and Canada Share

“Colossal Fossil”

Durban, South Africa – At the final day of the United Nations climate negotiations for 2011, countries received their biggest shaming yet for blocking greater progress in the talks. With the final outcome of negotiations not yet decided, it was at least clear enough which nations had done their worst in the last day and the entire two weeks. New Zealand took the infamous 1st prize for its strongest statement yet against continuing Kyoto. But Canada earned yet another Colossal Fossil for scoring the most dirty points at these negotiations, though they earned isolation and a minute of silence more than another fossilized award. Instead, the United States of America took the Colossal Fossil, too, for coming in second place in overall Fossil points and showing serious lack of action for such a major polluter. The Fossils as presented read:

“New Zealand wins the 1st place Fossil. The New Zealand government got a Fossil this week for severely mixed messages about its Kyoto Protocol 2nd Commitment Period stance. This time, it made it clear, describing Kyoto as 'actually an insult to New Zealand'. The only insult is to the citizens of New Zealand and the rest of the world, who will have to suffer the costs of climate change.”

“Canada wins a Colossal Fossil by mathematical majority. The Canadian government has made headlines and earned criticism from the international community in Durban for refusing to sign onto a second Kyoto commitment period, calling critical climate financing 'guilt payments', and bullying least developed countries into leaving the Kyoto Protocol. And over the two week negotiation period, Canada has won a staggering total of 6 Fossil of the Day awards. Mathematically, they are the undisputed winner of the 2011 Colossal Fossil award.



(over)



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But when environment minister Peter Kent announced Canada's third fossil of COP 17 on the floor of the House of Commons, members of his Conservative government cheered and applauded. The minister brought that reckless arrogance with him to Durban, where he's maintained a hard line and refused to budge on a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol and fought hard to put polluters before people.

Canada remains the only country in the world to have weakened its emissions targets after returning from COP 15 in Copenhagen and the only country to have signed and ratified the Kyoto protocol and then say that it has no intention of meeting its targets. The Government killed the only major federal renewable energy program in the country while plowing over 1 billion dollars a year of subsidies into the oil sector.

The Government's lack of ambition or action to combat climate change is no laughing matter. Climate change is one of the most serious issues that humanity has ever faced, and it is already affecting millions of people – including vulnerable communities in Canada.

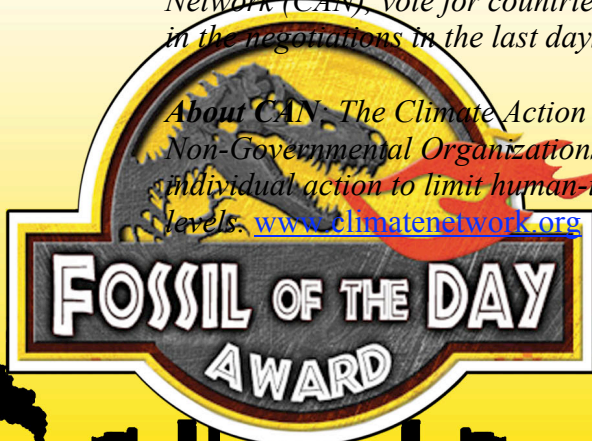
(minute of silence)

While a colossal fossil might be a fitting reward for such egregious behaviour, we'd prefer to confer that title on a country whose actions are still having an effect on the negotiations taking place, and not a laggard who's been pushed to the sidelines of this debate. Until Canada is prepared to become a real leader on climate change, it's time to turn our backs on the government's policies and move on with a coalition of the willing built from people, cities and provinces that understand the urgent need for action."

"And so, the United States of America wins a Colossal Fossil for sheer (un)ambition. For a country that in 2009 claimed to come back to the negotiations full of hope and change, it has mostly just brought more of the same – no commitments, no Kyoto, plenty of rhetoric, and minimal money. Whether because of a conservative Congress or an administration that hid behind it when its President and negotiators could have done more, we can only 'hope' that the U.S.A. 'changes' its stance and doesn't spend the next 4 years earning Colossal Fossils like Canada spent the last 4. This is not the kind of international cooperation CAN had in mind."

About the fossils: The Fossil of the Day awards were first presented at the climate talks in 1999, in Bonn, initiated by the German NGO Forum. During United Nations climate change negotiations (www.unfccc.int), members of the Climate Action Network (CAN), vote for countries judged to have done their 'best' to block progress in the negotiations in the last days of talks.

About CAN: The Climate Action Network is a worldwide network of roughly 700 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working to promote government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels. www.climatenetwork.org



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