

Spring Session Report 2008

Official Opposition Exposes Government's Poor Handling of Health Care, the Environment, Energy and More



Dr. David Swann, Shadow Environment Minister

During the first sitting of the Legislature since the election, David Swann lived up to the Official Opposition's commitment to hold the government accountable for its actions.

As Shadow Environment Minister, David's questions focussed on the protection of Alberta's precious air, land and water, and our collective responsibility to address climate change. But David also brought his experience as a medical doctor to the Legislature to ask questions about health care and farm worker safety, among other important topics. Here are the topics David raised in Question Period:

Environment

Western Irrigation District Legal Settlement
Groundwater Quality
Environmental Responsibility
Oil Sands Development
Water Management
Deep Well Flooding
Climate Change
Land-Use Framework
Compliance with Environmental Regulations
Water Quality of Athabasca River
Reclamation of Oil Sands Tailings Ponds
Contamination by Oil Sands Tailings Ponds
Game Ranching Industry
Water Ecosystem Stewardship
Effluent Discharge into Athabasca River
Land-Use Management of Gravel Pits
Oil Sands Tailings Ponds Impact on Groundwater
Northern Air Quality
Endangered Species



Health Care

Calgary Health Region Funding
Health System
Governance
Health Risk Study of Fort Chipewyan

People

Farm Worker Safety

David Swann in the Legislature

"Last summer I canoed down the Athabasca River with 30 concerned citizens and saw first-hand these toxic tar ponds. Tragically, this week 500 birds, what I would call canaries in the mineshaft in a sense, registered and raised other serious concerns for us about what this toxin is doing to soil, to water, indeed potentially to human health.

Again to the SRD minister: what in your department's assessment is the annual loss of wildlife associated with the tailings ponds? Do you have any numbers at all?"

"Without farm worker regulations in Alberta there's currently no age limit or work restrictions for children working in agricultural operations. The injury rate in children is twice that of the overall population. In fact, in Alberta a third of fatalities are children or youth. Since children cannot refuse unsafe work, will this minister stand up for children and work towards farm safety legislation?"

"As a doctor I always perform a diagnosis before treating a patient, but this government, in dissolving regional boards, has performed radical surgery without even checking the patient's chart, and they've done it without providing any evidence that they've done a careful, comprehensive analysis of the problems in the system and how two previous attempts at restructuring are going to solve this.

Where is the evidence that this will improve access, quality, and cost-effectiveness in the publicly funded health care system?"

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