



House of Commons Debates

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Chris in the Commons: Calling on the Federal Government to Clean up its Mess

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, My hometown of Hamilton has asked for, and must get, help from this Conservative government to deal with pollution at our airport.

The issue is pretty straight forward if you believe in the principle of polluter pay.

When the federal government owned the Hamilton airport lands prior to 1987, it operated a fire fighting training pad there. At the time, the firefighting foam that was being used contained perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, which has since shown up both at the airport and at points downstream. Links have been made between PFOS and compromised immune systems as well as certain types of cancer.

In 1996, the airport was transferred to the municipality, and essentially the federal government is now washing its hands of any responsibility, essentially just saying “buyer beware”.

But the fact remains that the pollution occurred while the federal government owned and operated the airport lands. Therefore the federal government must take responsibility for what took place on its watch, and must act now to assist and contribute to the city’s remediation efforts.

Anything else is a gross abdication of its responsibility to protect both human health and the environment.