



DEC 15 2011

Dr. Robert MacGregor
President
Canadian Dental Association
1815 Alta Vista Drive
Ottawa ON K1G 3Y6

Dear Dr. MacGregor:

Thank you for your letter of October 21, also addressed to the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health, providing the Canadian Dental Association's views on the inclusion of medical devices in a global, legally binding agreement to control mercury under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The Government of Canada actively consulted with stakeholders in preparation for the recent UNEP negotiating session on this subject, and will continue to do so throughout the ongoing negotiating process. I understand that representatives of the Association took part in those consultations.

Like the World Health Organization, Canada recognizes the importance of dental amalgam in this and other countries, especially developing nations. Health Canada considers dental amalgam necessary for the oral health of Canadians, on the grounds that there are applications in which alternative composite materials are not suitable and there is no clinical evidence that dental amalgam use is causing illness in the general population. Therefore, the Government of Canada believes that the use of mercury for dental amalgam should not be banned.

Throughout the global mercury negotiations, other approaches to minimize the use of mercury are being explored. Of particular note is the World Health Organization's 2011 report *Future Use of Materials for Dental Restoration*, in which a phase-down rather than a phase-out approach to the use of dental amalgam is encouraged. The report is available on the website at www.who.int/oral_health/publications/dental_material_2011.pdf.



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Please be assured that the Canadian Dental Association's concerns are being taken into consideration. Canada is committed to developing reasonable and appropriate requirements under the mercury treaty, and will continue to engage stakeholders in preparation for further negotiations.

Please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Kent". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

The Honourable Peter Kent, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, P.C., M.P.