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GROUPS LAUNCH NATIONAL COALITION TO PUSH FOR ECOLOGICAL STRATEGIES IN WAR ON WEST NILE

(OTTAWA) Groups across Canada today launched the Canadian Coalition for Health and Environment (CCHE), a Canada-wide initiative advocating effective, ecologically based strategies deal with West Nile virus. CCHE, is made up of eminent doctors, scientists, environmentalists, national and local groups, and concerned citizens across Canada.

Noting fears that fogging to kill adult mosquitoes may render human and other populations more susceptible to WNV infection, the CCHE released its Ecological West Nile virus strategy. Details can be found at: www.cche-info.com.

"Never has the link between ecosystem health and human health been so clear. Pesticides, particularly adulticides, cause a brief blip in mosquito populations but severely harm predators. We need as allies the myriad of species that are much better at killing mosquitoes than we are," said Ontario CCHE spokesperson, Meg Sears.

"Insecticides affect the immune and nervous systems. They can incapacitate the environmentally sensitive, and are the worst thing to be exposing people to when they might be fighting WNV," said Dr. Jennifer Armstrong of the Ottawa Environmental Health Clinic.

"Spraying ineffective pesticides in an attempt to control adult mosquitoes leads to a false sense of security in the community," said Angela Rickman, of the Sierra Club of Canada. "Further, using toxic, mutagenic substances like methoprene to control larvae when there are readily-available, less toxic alternatives like Bti available is lunacy. We're offering a reasoned, logical, healthy and effective approach."

CCHE congratulated Prince Edward Island and Quebec on their decision not to use pesticides to control adult mosquitoes.

"Comprehensive public education that engages each and every citizen to manage mosquito breeding sites and protect themselves from mosquitoes is the most important, effective initiative to reduce human WNV cases," said Katrina Miller of the Toronto Environmental Alliance.

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