



**Written Submission for the House of Commons
Finance Committee's Pre-budget Consultations
in Advance of the 2025 Federal Budget**

By: The Canadian Lung Association

August 1, 2025

Canadian Lung Association
B R E A T H E

Association pulmonaire du Canada
R E S P I R E Z

Recommendations:

1. **Recommendation 1:** Make strong commitments to minimize the impact of increasing air quality issues on the health of Canadians by:
 - **Recommendation 1.1:** *Increasing investments to help Canada reach its goals for medium-heavy duty (MHDV) vehicles.*
 - **Recommendation 1.2:** *Implementing a plan to accelerate the electrification of school buses in Canada by 2040.*
 - **Recommendation 1.3:** *Including radon mitigation in Energy Efficiency Rebate Programs.*
2. **Recommendation 2:** Implement strong measures to prevent a new generation from nicotine addiction through:
 - **Recommendation 2.1:** *Continuing to increase tobacco taxes.*
3. **Recommendation 3:** That the Government of Canada increase funding for respiratory research on three fronts to support the lung health of Canadians.

Recommendation 1: Make strong commitments to minimize the impact of increasing air quality issues on the health of Canadians

Canadians are already facing the health and financial burden of the climate crisis through extreme weather, exacerbated lung conditions, and worsened quality of air. In fact, thousands of hospital visits and more than 15,000 premature deaths each year in Canada are attributable to air pollution.¹

Polling conducted by the Canadian Lung Association found that more than half of Canadians state that air quality is having a bigger impact on their daily lives and more than

1 in 3 reported that poor air quality was already influencing their health. 86% wanted to see solutions that address poor air quality and health as a priority.¹

The transportation sector is a leading source of harmful air pollution in Canada and worldwide, accounting for 25% of our greenhouse gas emissions.^{2,3} Of particular concern from a lung health perspective is diesel exhaust, which is classified as a human carcinogen.^{2,3}

The short-term and long-term respiratory impacts of exposure to diesel are significant, ranging from reduced lung capacity, increased inflammation, risks of asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.^{3,4}

Diesel emissions alone are estimated to cause 2.2 million acute respiratory symptom days, 170,000 asthma symptoms days, and 3,000 acute child bronchitis episodes annually in Canada.^{3,4}

The Canadian Lung Association also supports the recommendations in the area of traffic related air pollution as outlined by the Green Budget Coalition report.⁵

Recommendation 1.1: Increasing investments to help Canada reach its goals for medium-heavy duty (MHDV) vehicles.

Our polling indicated that Canadians were not only feeling the impacts of poor air quality, but they were making the connection between traffic emissions and air pollution. We also found that as a result, Canadians are highly supportive of measures that would reduce the direct impact of traffic emissions on air pollution. 82% supported interim targets to help Canada reach aggressive goals to get zero-emission in medium-heavy duty vehicles.

The Canadian Lung Association was pleased to support the Minister of Environment and Climate Change in their recent announcement on regulations affecting light duty vehicles and we encourage the government to move expeditiously on planning for regulations for MHDV. Critical to that planning is that the health impact be considered and integrated into planning and rationale.

In addition, the Government of Canada's light-duty electric vehicle mandate has been under pressure. We also implore this government to hold firm and keep the light-duty electric vehicle mandate in place as we have made significant progress toward the electrification of light duty cars in Canada.

Recommendation 1.2: Implement a plan to accelerate the electrification of school buses in Canada by 2040.

Over two million children in Canada ride school buses daily, 70% of which are fueled by diesel.⁴ The Canadian Lung Association is one of many organizations, part of the Canadian Electric School Bus Alliance (CESBA) calling on the electrification of school buses by 2040. According to recent polling, 82% of Canadians are supportive of measures to accelerate the electrification of school buses.¹

Improvements in battery cost and performance over the last decade have significantly increased the range capabilities of Electric School Buses (ESBs). New ESBs in the market have ranges of approximately 160 km, covering the daily travel requirements of most school buses.⁴

In 2021, the Government of Canada launched the Zero Emission Transit Fund, investing \$2.75 billion to support public transit and school bus operators to transition to zero emission vehicles, from planning to purchasing vehicles and building infrastructure.⁶ Additionally commitments have been made to support transit agencies and school boards in transitioning their bus fleets to zero-emission technology through the planning and the purchasing of at least 5,000 zero-emission buses along with the necessary supporting infrastructure.⁴

Additional funding is required to accelerate implementation, including awareness raising and education efforts on the important benefits to children's health of transitioning our school bus fleets. Additional funding should be streamlined and easily accessible to those that can utilize them.

The federal government should look to New Brunswick's recent announcement to update the provincial *Clean Air Act* to ensure all of the Government of New Brunswick's vehicle fleet, including school buses are electrified by 2035. A similar commitment and roadmap from the federal government would be a welcome announcement.

Funding should take a healthy equity approach to prioritize funding for those individuals in areas disproportionately impacted by traffic related air pollution. Finally, interim targets to achieve the goals associated with medium and heavy-duty vehicles, including school buses should be included as part of a comprehensive plan which includes an implementation plan.

Recommendation 1.3: Include radon mitigation in Energy Efficiency Rebate Programs

Budget 2021 announced an investment of \$4.4 billion in home energy retrofits for Canadians and Budget 2022 committed more funds to Greener Buildings and Homes Programs and Budget 2023 reinforced that commitment.⁷⁻⁹ These programs are significant to help Canadians save money and reduce their greenhouse gas contribution. However, as Canadians tighten their homes and increase the energy efficiency, they may be exposing themselves to radon gas.

Radon gas is the second leading cause of lung cancer. However, when high concentrations are detected through testing; mitigation systems can be installed. Many Canadians however are unaware of radon and the health hazards it may pose.¹⁰ They may also be reluctant to test to avoid the costs associated with mitigation.¹⁰ Inclusion of radon mitigation within the energy efficiency rebate program would address the unintended impacts of making our homes more efficient and ensure the quality of our air is improved both inside and out.

On top of these rebate programs, the CLA would like to see the Government of Canada make similar commitments as the New Brunswick's government recently did. In updating New Brunswick's *Clean Air Act*, the New Brunswick government guaranteed that everyone in the province has the right to clean air, and the province is now requiring all new schools, hospitals, long-term care homes, and other public buildings to have modern air filtration systems. The CLA would like to see Canada's federal government make a similar commitment.

Recommendation 2: Implement strong measures to prevent a new generation from nicotine addiction

Tobacco continues to be the number one cause of preventable disease and death in Canada killing over 46,000 annually. While Canada's smoking rate is going down, still far too many people continue to smoke. The 2018 announcement of a new Federal Tobacco Strategy with the goal of less than 5% smoking rate by 2035, brought forward an ambitious public health goal in Canada for which strong measures are required. In addition, in a survey conducted by the CLA 13.9% of respondents said that the number of young people vaping is what they believe to be is the most pressing lung health issue facing Canada today, while 12.7% said it is the healthcare costs of tobacco use. Overall, this indicates that many Canadians want action on this.

The CLA applauds the work that the past Liberal government has done to reduce tobacco in this country, including the announcement of a federal tobacco cost recovery fee. However, despite these recent gains, as is highlighted above, more must be done to prevent a future generation from addiction to nicotine, as Canada has some of the highest teen vaping rates in the world, including a vaping cost recovery framework. Evidence continues to demonstrate that these products should not be used by young people and those who do not smoke. Most recently, for instance, an Oxford University study demonstrates that vaping doubled the risk of serious lung disease, even in individuals without a history of smoking. We hope that this federal government will build on some of the progress that was made toward the end of the last federal government on this file.

Therefore, the CLA asks that the Government of Canada increase the tax rate on e-cigarettes by at least 12% and implement phase 2 of the cost recovery fee regulations to e-cigarette companies in addition to tobacco companies.

Recommendation 2: *Continue to raise tobacco taxes*

Tobacco taxes are one of the most effective policy levers for preventing tobacco use, particularly amongst young people. The Canadian Lung Association alongside other health organizations have called for an increase of \$4.00 per carton of 200 cigarettes, with proportionate increases for other tobacco products. This will be a significant additional

amount of funding that could be allocated to government priorities while at the same time serving important public health measures.

It should be noted that counter arguments that taxes increase contraband or unfairly raise prices should not be considered as legitimate reasons to not raise taxes. At the same time the tobacco industry continues to raise their own prices resulting in an estimated more than \$2.6 billion in revenue annually.

Continued increases of tobacco taxes are one of the most important preventative tools at our disposal and should be included in any comprehensive strategy to reduce tobacco use.

Recommendation 3: That the Government of Canada increase funding for respiratory research on three fronts to support the lung health of Canadians.

Respiratory research is significantly underfunded and there are health consequences to the lack of funding. For instance, a publication in the Lancet, *Breathing Barriers: Bridging Lung Health, Research, and Awareness Gaps* (2025) showed that respiratory research is inadequate, inequitable, and a missed opportunity. CLA was one of many respiratory based organizations to elevate these results in a [joint release](#).

The authors highlight that chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, and pulmonary fibrosis, constitute a primary global mortality factor and the third leading cause of medically assisted deaths in Canada. While expenditures related to COPD alone account for 0.1% of the world's annual GDP, the volume of published respiratory medicine research has decreased over several decades when compared to other disease categories.

CLA calls for the following measures to better support respiratory research in Canada:

1. Increase funding for tri-council agencies, including the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.
2. Establish a research accelerator fund matching and incentivizing provincial business, and non-profit investments in direct and in-direct research.
3. Remove the cap on international trainees.

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About The Canadian Lung Association

The Canadian Lung Association is the leading organization in Canada helping Canadians breathe. We work to save lives, prevent lung disease and improve lung health through research, advocacy, education and support. As a non-profit and volunteer-based health charity, we depend on donations from the public to support our mission to lead nationwide and international lung health initiatives, prevent lung disease, help people manage lung disease and promote lung health.

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