

September 10, 2008

Emissions Higher Than Reported at Alberta Refineries

Calgary – David Swann, Alberta Liberal Shadow Environment Minister, says the government must improve emissions measurements and leak detection at Alberta refineries. A report by the Alberta Research Council shows that estimates currently used to determine toxic emissions do not accurately reflect actual carcinogens and greenhouse gases released into the environment.

“According to the study, emissions of benzene were actually 18 times higher than estimated; methane emissions were 9 times higher; and emissions of smog-causing compounds, 15 times higher,” Swann says.

ARC used a new technology, Differential Absorption Light Detection and Ranging (DIAL), to take the measurements. As the most accurate technology for measuring emissions, DIAL should be immediately adopted as the government’s primary means of measuring pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions.

“For a start, we should make DIAL measuring mandatory for all upgraders being built in the Edmonton region,” Swann says. “We can’t make responsible decisions about public health and environmental stewardship without a true measure of industrial emissions. The people living in the industrial heartland have a right to know exactly what is in the air they breathe.”

Swann notes that adopting the technology would also be good for industry’s reputation and that public confidence in our monitoring systems would be assured.

“We have a wonderful opportunity here to show the world that we’re serious about climate change and air quality. Industry will benefit, too; fugitive emissions cost money, and DIAL technology will help business discover and plug leaks.”

The ARC report can be found here:

<http://www.arc.ab.ca/areas-of-focus/carbon-conversion-capture-and-storage/cccs-publications-and-resources/dial-emission-reports/>

-30-

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