



CANADA

# Debates of the Senate

---

3rd SESSION

• 40th PARLIAMENT

• VOLUME 147

• NUMBER 9

---

**CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR CLIMATE  
AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES**

**Questions by:**

**The Honourable Claudette Tardif**

**Tuesday, March 23, 2010**

## THE SENATE

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

### CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES

**Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I wish to return to a question that I asked on March 17 regarding the Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences. In response to my question, the Leader of the Government in the Senate indicated that the foundation was not shut down and that its mandate had been extended to 2012. While that is correct, the fact is that no new funding has been given to the foundation. Existing funding will only permit keeping the lights on until all research reports are in before closing the books. The extension for one year only allows the foundation to wrap up its activities. With the funding now completely spent or committed, the eventual closure of the foundation seems inevitable.

Can the government guarantee that it will provide new monies to enable the foundation to remain open past 2012?

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, I can only repeat what I said in answer to the honourable senator's question last week. I am pleased that Senator Tardif acknowledged that I was correct in my facts.

I will repeat my answer: Last year, the mandate of the Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences was extended until March 31, 2012, which is two years from now. As I have said, this extension will enable the foundation to report to the government on the work it has done with the \$110 million allotted to it over the last 10 years.

Climate change science is valuable work, and our continued commitment is evident with our investment of \$397 million in the budget for the Canadian Space Agency's RADARSAT Constellation Mission that will support Environment Canada's research programs, including climate science.

I repeat what I have said in this place many times: We were elected to bring in and fund our programs as announced in our budgets, Throne Speeches and platforms. We were not elected to carry on the programs of the previous government.

**Senator Tardif:** Your Honour, the foundation has not had a cash infusion since the Conservatives came to power four years ago. With no new funding in sight, projects have begun to wind down and staff and students are beginning to leave. This is affecting research on climate and atmospheric sciences. In fact, no post-doctoral researchers can be hired, and few of them see a future in their field of study in Canada. A petition demanding new funding for the foundation has the signatures of over

1,400 graduate students and researchers. These students and researchers believe that the lack of funding is killing research groups and squandering much-needed experience and resources.

Prominent researchers have already left the country, such as Dr. Katrin Juliane Meissner, who cited "... the irresponsible and short-sighted ideology of the Conservative government ..." as one of the reasons for leaving. With many Canadian researchers in the field looking for new positions outside of Canada, how will the government stop the brain drain?

**Senator LeBreton:** Every day someone gets up and says "keep funding this program" or "keep funding that program." Then the next day, your leader is saying we will run up the deficit. One cannot have it both ways.

We have our own programs. I indicated one a few moments ago. We put an incredible amount of money into universities. We have had university presidents no less, then the honourable senator's former colleague, Allan Rock, applauding the government for its efforts. We have expended many resources in research and development in climate science.

The program the honourable senator referred to is ending in two years' time. I think with most young people, especially today when young people are so mobile, if they are in one program and that program is drawing to a close, they will not sit there and hope a miracle will save them; they will look for resources in another program.

[Translation]

**Senator Tardif:** Could the Leader of the Government in the Senate give us the exact number of researchers who have left our country due to reduced funding in the field of natural sciences?

[English]

**Senator LeBreton:** This argument is going back and forth; who has left and who has come back.

The fact is that the government has put incredible resources into research and development, not only in Budget 2010 but also through the various infrastructure and education programs. Many graduates stay in this country. Many more new Canadians have chosen to live in this country. Therefore, I am sure the honourable senator will come up with three or four names of individuals who went to the United States and then we will come up with three or four names of people who came to Canada. It goes on and on like a merry-go-round and nothing is resolved.