



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Support for Research and Development

Question by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Wednesday, April 24, 2013

## THE SENATE

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### SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

#### SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

**Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, today I will follow up on a question I asked a few weeks ago on the government's muzzling of scientific research. An Environment Canada analysis released under the Access to Information Act in 2010 gives us a glimpse of what scientists and Canadians think about the government's policy. The analysis found that Environment Canada scientists are very frustrated with this new process. They feel the intent of the policy is to prevent them from speaking to media. Also, there is a widespread perception among Canadian media that our scientists have been muzzled by the media relations policy. The government is even trying to extend its muscle outside Canada's borders to scientists with whom Canadian scientists are collaborating through a new policy on scholarly publication of articles at Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Canada's Information Commissioner has decided there has been enough credible information to justify an investigation. She has recently launched an investigation into the muzzling of scientists in seven federal agencies, including the departments of the Environment, Fisheries and Oceans, Natural Resources and the National Research Council of Canada.

• (1420)

Honourable senators, when will the government finally put an end to its policy of muzzling scientists, whose work is paid for by Canadian taxpayers?

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, the government is extremely proud of our scientists and of the world-class scientific research that they do. Federal scientists regularly provide media interviews and publish thousands of research papers each year. For example, in 2012, Environment Canada scientists published more than 700 scientific articles.

The government made an announcement in the last few days with regard to the oil sands in collaboration with the Minister of the Environment from the Province of Alberta. The public will be able to directly access a portal to receive up-to-date information on the scientific research with regard to the development of the oil stands.

As the honourable senator mentioned, the Information Commissioner has indicated an interest in looking into this matter. The government fully supports the Information Commissioner and her work on this very important issue.

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