



Westray Act: What politicians are saying

Here is some of what current and former politicians have said about the Westray Act. Yet, why is there such little action?

"All employers must be held accountable for their negligence. The Westray Law was introduced to hold companies criminally accountable for workers' safety, but only one person has ever gone to jail. This is appalling: if one kills a worker, one goes to jail. We must continue to fight to improve the health and safety conditions for workers, because every worker deserves to get home safe at the end of the day."

- Matthew Green, MP (April 28, 2023)

"Our government has always supported the use of the Westray law when appropriate and certainly would not stand in the way of charges that were applied. We believe that workers' rights are fundamental, and they are fundamental in not just the protection of those individual workers in this case but certainly of their families."

- The Hon. Patty Hajdu, MP (March 22, 2021)

"As a Steelworker, I am proud to have been part of the campaign that resulted in changes to the Criminal Code in 2003 to protect workers in what became known as the Westray law after an explosion rocked the Westray mine 26 years ago in Nova Scotia, killing 26 workers and forever scarring the workers' families and the surrounding communities. In the 15 years since the Westray law was passed, only one person has been convicted under the law. In memory of all those lost each year, I call on the government to stop the killing and enforce the law."

- Scott Duvall, MP (April 26, 2018)

"As we mark the 25th anniversary of the Westray mine disaster, when 26 miners were killed, I am also extremely proud of the tireless efforts of the United Steelworkers, whose advocacy on behalf of Westray families resulted in the Westray law. We just have to make sure that all levels of government enforce this law."

- Sheri Benson, MP (May 17, 2017)

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"I was seven years old when the Westray mine exploded 25 years ago. I remember sitting in Mrs. Williams' class at Frank H. MacDonald Elementary School as we learned of the disaster that would break the back of my community. We all spent days watching the tragedy unfold, and hoped and prayed that the rescue workers would find the men alive underground. Our hope would soon fade as we learned that our community had lost 26 fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons. After years of advocacy by members of the families who were affected by this disaster, Parliament passed laws to promote safer workplace environments. I commit that as long as I am fortunate enough to sit in this House, I will work to see those rules enforced. To the families of those 26 men who were lost in the explosion a quarter century ago, we remember those loved ones on the sombre anniversary this week."

- Sean Fraser, MP (May 8, 2017)

"The Westray Act was passed a decade ago, but the Minister of Labour is not enforcing the law. When will she start doing her job and protect Canadian workers?"

- Claude Gravelle, MP (September 21, 2012)

"The Westray bill was a positive step, but we are reminded today that more can and needs to be done to improve worker safety and corporate accountability in our country."

- Rodger Cuzner, MP (May 9, 2012)

"We still have three workers a day dying on the job in Canada. We have an awful lot more work to do in these areas. We passed the Westray bill. That never would have happened, had it not been for the union movement. Here I refer to the steelworkers and all of those who supported that strong legislation we now have, which is being brought to bear in appropriate circumstances."

- The hon. Jack Layton, MP (June 23, 2011)