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## **CANADIAN FIRE CHIEFS CALL ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO BACK ITS COMMITMENT TO “THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF CANADIANS”**

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**OTTAWA, March 23, 2010** – The Government’s Throne Speech commitment to “protecting the health and safety of Canadians” requires more than crime prevention initiatives, say Canada’s Fire Chiefs. It calls for a national level of safety preparedness – for anticipating and addressing problems that may endanger families, property and businesses.

The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) is in Ottawa this week to persuade government decision-makers to take action on a number of issues critical to protecting the health and safety of Canadians.

“The Canadian Fire Service is a national first responder that needs federal government support to work in an integrated way for the benefit and security of all Canadians” said Calgary Fire Chief Bruce Burrell, President of CAFC.

CAFC is urging the government to take action on a number of priorities, including:

- Ensuring speedy passage into law of the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act that died on the Order Paper of the previous Parliament.
- Amendments to the national building and fire codes to require installation of automatic sprinkler systems in new homes. Studies show that cheaper building materials increasingly being used in new home construction have significantly less heat resistance in fires before they collapse, injuring and killing home occupants and firefighters.
- Designation of exclusive radio broadband access to first responders like firefighters, police and paramedics, to ensure reliable communications among them in emergencies.
- Adequate funding to the federal government’s Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) that supports integrated response to major emergencies in communities across Canada.

- Modest tax relief for volunteer firefighters who protect lives, homes and businesses in over 90 per cent of Canadian communities, often at their own expense.
- Creation of a mechanism for the national coordination of emergency response by the Fire Service, including collection and analysis of fire statistics to improve awareness, planning and response.

“The Canadian Fire Service is one of the principal guardians of the safety of Canadians in their homes and communities and Fire Chiefs are counting on the federal government to stand behind its commitment to Canadians by addressing these pressing issues,” said Chief Burrell.

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