Environment Minister Peter Kent goes on the offensive against government critics

Lately, it seems that Environment Minister Peter Kent is getting a little sensitive about criticism against the Harper government’s climate policy.

Last week, a study by Globe International claimed that Canada and Mozambique have the distinction of being the only 2 countries out of 33 countries profiled that do not currently have climate change legislation on their books.

"For the first time, one country – Canada – has regressed following its decision to withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol and the subsequent repealing of its "flagship" climate legislation, the Kyoto Implementation Act," notes the report.

In an interview with the Hill Times— who first reported on the study—Kent fought back calling the study a 'low blow.'

"[We] don’t need legislation when our regulatory process is working well. The organization looks back, clinging to [the] Kyoto [Protocol]," he said.

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"We certainly don’t criticize any countries that have decided to make a second commitment to Kyoto, but we’re much more focused on creating a climate change regime by 2015 that we will have in place and ratified by 2020 when Copenhagen finishes its phase."

Kent, an ex-journalist, also raised eyebrows recently for writing a letter to the editor suggesting that PostMedia News' reporter Mike De Souza was an “environmental activist” because of a story he wrote about tougher fuel economy standards costing the economy $11.2 billion.

"I am writing to clarify a few points from Mike De Souza's Dec 24 article," Kent wrote according to MacLean's.

"Mr. De Souza, like most environmental activists, believes that a carbon tax is the only answer to combat climate change. Our government is fundamentally opposed to broad-based carbon tax schemes like the NDP's $21 billion plan to tax everything without links to environmental benefits."

And this week, according to an article in the Guelph Mercury, Kent will be in Guelph to address the local chamber of commerce to boast about his ministry’s accomplishments.

"We discovered that, in the follow-up discussions with folks and news conferences that an awful lot of the positive stories, the good news stories, and the accomplishments of the department of the past few years — in regards to water, but across the environment department’s responsibilities — have been lost in the noise of question period, and the larger preoccupations of the national economy, the international recession, and our focus on jobs and the economy," he said.

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According to the article, Kent added that in the coming weeks, "he will 'make a number of speeches aimed at correcting what he called misrepresentations about the government's work on climate change, regulation of waste water, clean air, and the oil sands."

Scientists and green groups have long since railed against the Tories for withdrawing from Kyoto, passing Bill C-38 which essentially repealed the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, changing the Navigable Waters act, gutting the Fisheries Act, promoting development of the 'tar sands' and for cutting science funding.

It seems that Kent is fighting back.

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