



CALVIN CALLAHAN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 35

Office: (608) 237-9135
Toll Free: (888) 534-0035

Rep.Callahan@legis.wi.gov
P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708-8952

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Contact: Rep. Calvin Callahan

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(608) 237-9135

Callahan Files Formal Complaint Over Canadian Wildfire Smoke

[Madison, WI] – In a bold move to defend public health and demand accountability, Representative Calvin Callahan (R-Tomahawk) is joining lawmakers from Iowa, Minnesota, and North Dakota in filing a formal complaint against Canada over the wildfire smoke that continues to drift across the U.S. border.

The joint letter (attached), submitted to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lee Zeldin and the International Joint Commission (IJC), cites Canada's ongoing failure to get its wildfires under control, repeatedly blanketing the Midwest in thick, hazardous smoke. The letter calls for an investigation into Canada's wildfire management practices and for potential remedies under international law.

The IJC is a bi-national body established under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 to prevent and resolve disputes affecting the shared waters and air quality along the border. The legislators argue that Canada's failure to contain massive wildfires, especially in Manitoba, has harmed the health and quality of life of more than 20 million Americans in the Midwest.

"From farming and forestry to fishing and construction, Wisconsin is a proud state built on being outdoors," said Rep. Callahan. "However, our skies are being choked by wildfire smoke we didn't start and can't control. Last Thursday, six of the ten worst air quality readings in the entire country were right here in Wisconsin. That's not only frustrating, but it's a threat to our health and way of life. Our workers, families, and kids can't afford to breathe toxic air day after day. Canada needs to step up and take responsibility before more Wisconsinites suffer."

Joining Rep. Callahan are State Representative Austin Harris of Iowa, State Senator Clare Cory of North Dakota, and State Representative Elliott Engen of Minnesota. All signers are representing a border or near-border state that has endured repeated air quality advisories as a result of Canadian wildfires.

"Enough is enough," said Rep. Callahan. "We owe it to our constituents, especially our kids, seniors, and those with respiratory issues, to fight for clean air. If Canada can't get these wildfires under control, they need to face real consequences. We won't sit back while our air becomes a health hazard."

Lawmakers are requesting a response within 30 days from both the IJC and EPA.

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The 35th Assembly District includes all of Langlade and Lincoln Counties, as well as portions of Marathon, Oconto, Oneida, and Shawano Counties.