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Alberta will continue to defend economy from Kyoto implementation, Klein says

NEW YORK-Alberta will continue to do everything in its power to protect the economy and ensure that provincial control over resources and the environment is respected, Premier Ralph Klein said.

Klein was responding to news that the federal Liberal government used its majority to pass a House of Commons resolution to ratify the Kyoto Protocol despite the objections of the provinces and industry. He spoke from New York, where he was concluding a successful mission to promote energy investment in Alberta.

"While the resolution is not binding on the federal government, ratification of the Kyoto Accord is a mere formality that shouldn't be a surprise to anyone. The onus is now on the federal government to bring certainty to industry and to repair the damage caused by the unnecessary rush to ratify Kyoto by developing an implementation plan that works for Canada. We're prepared to do whatever it takes - including launching a constitutional challenge, if necessary - to ensure that Alberta's concerns are addressed in Ottawa's implementation plan," Klein said.

"The federal Liberals have defied common sense and the objections of the provinces in order to grant the Prime Minister his Christmas wish. Now they owe it to Canadians to talk seriously and openly about how they're going to live up to the Prime Minister's promises to protect the energy industry and the economy - especially since Canada will be the only country in the Western Hemisphere with Kyoto reduction targets," he added.

"Our province will do its fair share to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Climate Change Emissions and Management Act, which will return to the Legislature next spring after more consultations," said Environment Minister Lorne Taylor. "Alberta will also continue to urge the federal government to work with provinces, territories and industry to develop a climate change plan that takes into account the unique nature of Canada."

International and Intergovernmental Relations Minister Halvar Jonson noted that Alberta's efforts have helped to raise awareness across Canada about the costs of achieving Kyoto and its limitations.

"We have helped push the federal government to a point where it is at least promising to be serious about addressing the economic issues associated with implementation," Jonson said. "We were able to successfully work with the other provinces and territories to develop 12 principles that can serve as the foundation for a truly made-in-

Canada plan. And we will hold the Prime Minister to his word that he will not jeopardize investment in Alberta's oil sands which, as he acknowledged in Edmonton last week, are so key to the economic prosperity and security of this country."

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