



Summary

The Time to Act is Now!

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Former president of Accessibility Standards Canada

A Powerful and Resilient Closing Statement from Paul Claude Bérubé

Paul Claude Bérubé, former chair of Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC) and former president of Independent Living Canada, delivered a powerful and heartfelt closing statement that reinforced the central themes of the Resilience Conference and paid tribute to the courage, commitment, and collaboration of all those involved.

In his closing address, Paul Claude Bérubé reflected on his decades of advocacy for disability rights and his long-standing engagement with the Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) community. Although not a specialist in MCS, Paul Claude Bérubé has followed its evolution for over 25 years and expressed disappointment that, despite increased awareness and knowledge, tangible progress remains limited. He framed his message around a core disconnect: while understanding of MCS has grown, institutional responses have not kept pace with this growth. He posed three critical questions to the audience: Where is the official recognition of MCS? Are healthcare professionals adequately trained to address it? What measures have actually been implemented to foster real inclusion? These, he emphasized, are not rhetorical questions but challenges that demand reflection, accountability, and action from society as a whole.

Drawing historical parallels, Paul Claude Bérubé likened today's treatment of MCS to past public health oversights, such as the delayed responses to the dangers of smoking and asbestos. He argued that change only comes when scientific evidence, civic will, and political leadership converge. At this pivotal moment, he warned of two possible futures: one marked by passivity and continued inaction, the other by systemic change driven by courage and commitment. He called

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on various stakeholders to step up, urging politicians to legislate, businesses to accommodate, healthcare professionals to educate themselves, and the public to demand safer environments. Paul Claude Bérubé concluded with a powerful appeal: for this conference to be a true turning point and for every individual to leave with a commitment to build a future where no one must choose between breathing and existing.