

TRANSCRIPT OF THE STATEMENT READ BY ROB ROHN, VICE PRESIDENT OF CANADIAN AVALANCHE CENTER, AT INTERNATIONAL SNOW SCIENCE MEETING, WHISTLER, SEPTEMBER 26, 2008

Rob Rohn, Vice President of CAC: "I would like to thank Pascal [Haegeli] and Bob [Uttl] for their perspectives on this very interesting issue. Just for the record, I am vice-president of the Canadian Avalanche Center which contrary to the earlier part is not a government institution [1]. We are not for profit whose mission is to advance public avalanche safety in Canada and we published the Avaluator [2]. Our board has obviously been following this issue with interest since it came up in May. We acknowledge and we expect that science behind Avaluator is constantly evolving. The ADFAR 2 project as mentioned has been tasked to review and refine Avaluator [3] and all inputs will be considered in that process. Our board believes that it's important to balance the best available science with practioners' wisdom to arrive to the best possible outcome for avalanche safety in Canada. As such the CAC believes that even if it isn't perfect, the Avaluator is an effective tool for enhancing public safety in Canada and that in some role is better with it than it is without." [4]

[1] We [Uttl et al.] have never made any such claim. We stated that the development of the Avaluator was funded by Canadian taxpayers money as part of the ADFAR project funded by a grant from National Search and Rescue Secretariat of Canada, an agency of Canadian Government (www.nss.gc.ca) (> \$500,000). The Contents page of the Avaluator states: "We would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada for this initiative through the Search and Rescue Initiative Fund [SAR NIF]."

[2] The Avaluator (2006) was published by the Canadian Avalanche Association as per the copyrights notice printed on the Avaluator.

[3] The ADFAR 2 project "tasked to review and refine the Avaluator" is headed by Dr. Pascal Haegeli, the lead author on the Avaluator, and who has not been able to produce the data behind the Avaluator. Dr. Pascal Haegeli is in a direct conflict of interest; he has an interest to promote his earlier work but he also has an obligation to find flaws in it. This non-independent evaluation of the Avaluator is also funded by Canadian taxpayers (Government of Canada) through the ADFAR 2 project funded by Search and Rescue New Initiative Fund (http://www.nss.gc.ca/site/newsarinitiatives/nif_projects/newprojects07-08_e.asp, ADFAR 2, \$559,030.60)

[4] At the time Mr. Rohn made this statement, the CAC already had the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of Dr. Floyer's Review of Obvious Clue Method that the CAC commissioned (CAC Floyer Report). Following our lead, Dr. Floyer independently failed to replicate the prevention values of the Obvious Clues published in the Avaluator and concluded that the prevention values published in the Avaluator are inflated, as we had originally demonstrated. Dr. Floyer stated: "The difference between the prevention value distribution from this study and that published in the Avaluator is quite considerable." (CAC Floyer Report, p. 15). According to the CAC Floyer Report, the prevention value for 4 or fewer clues is only 47% rather than the 77% stated in the Avaluator (CAC Floyer Report, Figure 2b). Thus, the CAC Floyer Report replicated our earlier findings showing that the the obvious clues prevention values published in the Avaluator are inflated. Dr. Floyer's results are remarkable because the actual prevention values are still much lower than he reports as, following Drs. Haegeli and McCammon's lead, he also inappropriately eliminated all accidents with missing values prior to these analyses – 71% of his sample in all.

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