FRACTING OUR FUTURE?

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Letters to the Editor

Dump the pipelines
With the possible collapse of the oil market in the near future, industry wants to extract as much profit as quickly as possible. Enter the plans to build the Keystone XL pipeline and others. To feed these pipelines, oil production must be tripled. But what does this mean for all of us – for our families, our children, and our grandchildren? Nobody has asked us if we want these pipelines.

The situation with our environment is critical. Tripling the production of oil means three times more air pollution, three times more water pollution, and three times more soil pollution. It means that we will cross the point of no return. The Keystone XL project and other pipelines like it should be placed where they belong – into the political dump of history.

Jiri Selner
St. Albert, Alberta

Get out and vote
Democracy is a form of government in which all eligible citizens have an equal say in the decisions that affect their lives. Canadians do this by exercising their right to vote at election time.

Every election, I knock on every door in the polling area where I live. I try to engage people in conversation, encourage them to vote, preferably for my party, but I tell them all they should vote for whomever. I keep notes of what they tell me.

Every Election Day I am a scrutineer at the polling station and then contact folks who have not come to vote. “Do you know this is Election Day? Would you like a ride? Do you need a baby sitter?” I ask.

People say, “Yes I will be there soon.” But they do not come.

People say, “I have already voted,” and I know their names are not crossed off the voters’ list.

Even after all my efforts, the voter turnout in my poll last federal election was 52 per cent, close to the national average. This clearly means that about half of all Canadians are NOT interested in having a say in the decisions that affect their lives.

Voting in Canada is really easy. I hope that talking about this will help ordinary Canadians realize the importance of voting and get many more of us out to vote in the next election.

Judy Sumner
Capreol, Ontario

Where is the investigation?
It has been several months since Federal Court Judge Richard Mosley ruled that electoral fraud occurred during the last federal election.

It made me wonder: if electoral fraud was known to be committed, and that it is presumably against the law in Canada, then why isn’t the RCMP investigating it? Why aren’t they trying to find out who perpetrated the fraud?

I would like to know if the RCMP are, in fact, investigating this fraud against Canadians and if not, why not?

Shannon Powell
New Westminster, B.C.

We must not forget
Stephen Harper’s Conservative government has shown its true colours by gaining power at any cost (remember the robocall scandal), then appointing senators (Mike Duffy, Pamela Wallin, Patrick Brazeau) when he hypocritically stated that Senate reform was a key mandate.

This political malaise has trickled down to the municipal level (think Toronto Mayor Rob Ford, Laval Mayor Gilles Vaillancourt, and Montreal Mayor Gérald Tremblay) who have taken the ideology of entitlement to new heights.

The social contract is based upon the trust we, the electorate, have for those elected. But the disparity in financial compensation between those in power (both political and in business) and the regular taxpayers has fostered a belief they have the right to abuse their powers as long as they don’t get caught.

But unlike the majority of the B.C. electorate from the last provincial election, we must not forget the travesties of abuse we have suffered at the hands of the federal Conservative government and become apathetic amnesiacs come 2015.

Rafe Sunshine
Victoria, B.C.

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Dear friends,

What a summer and fall, and what a winter coming up! Over the summer and early fall I was truly “on the road.”

In July I was in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, for the First Ministers’ meeting where we held an alternative people’s summit on health care and staged a fabulous march with thousands of people. The health care accord runs out in 2014 and we are busy preparing for next year’s meeting, which will involve an all-out campaign to have the premiers resist Stephen Harper’s plan to drastically reduce the federal government’s share of health care funding.

I was in Saugeen Shores, Ontario, to support terrific local groups fighting to stop Bruce Power from burying its nuclear waste in deep geologic depositories only a kilometre away from Lake Huron. We had more than 400 people out to this public meeting.

I visited Fredericton and Moncton, New Brunswick, to support First Nations communities and others in their campaign to stop seismic testing for fracking in more than 20 per cent of the province. More than 500 people came out to a public meeting in Moncton.

I went to Toronto, Ontario, for the founding of the powerful new union UNIFOR, which brings together 300,000 members of the former unions CAW and CEP. It was a wonderful weekend of celebration and solidarity and commitment to work together to defeat the Harper agenda.

I was in Regina, Saskatchewan, for a large public forum on the need to keep the city’s water in public hands just weeks before the municipal referendum on whether or not to privatize the city’s water treatment system. The Harper government will only help pay for these kinds of upgrades if the municipalities opt for financing through public-private partnerships.

I travelled to Bern, Switzerland, to present the City of Bern and the University of Bern with “Blue Community” certificates as both took the pledge to promote water as a public trust, public service and human right. They are the first non-Canadian institutions to do this.

Next was New York City for the historic gathering of the International Women’s Earth and Climate Summit, where 100 women from around the world sent a message to governments calling for immediate action on climate change.

I was in Saint John, New Brunswick, for a high profile public forum and rally against the Energy East Pipeline during the corporate-sponsored Atlantic Canada Energy Summit; then Vancouver for the 2013 dynamic youth gathering Powershift, and finally California for a gathering of visionaries on the rights of nature.

In between all of this, I had the opportunity to visit many of your wonderful communities to talk about my new book Blue Future. Many thanks to all of you who came out!

In October, the Council of Canadians was in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, for our annual conference titled “Groundswell: Grassroots power in the age of extreme energy.” This exciting event will be followed by our Common Causes alternative summit to the Conservative Convention in Calgary.

As you can see, we continue to be involved in the major issues of our day and the Council finds itself at the heart of the key struggles against the Harper government’s agenda.

I have never been more proud of us than when the Federal Court of Canada ruled last spring that there had indeed been electoral fraud in the last federal election and its most likely source was the database of the Conservative Party of Canada. The Council was proud to support the brave citizens who came forward to fight for all our rights.

But we need to keep up the fight. No government in Canada’s history has so profoundly changed the face of our country. Windfall tax cuts for corporations; the scapegoating of public servants; removing the federal role in health care; assaults on working people and unions; axing the Wheat Board; cuts to culture; gutting freshwater regulations; Kyoto abandoned; waging war on scientists; targeting refugees; softening Canada’s former stand on torture; trading with human rights abusers; tying foreign aid to the demands of our mining industry – these and other policies are changing Canada at home and in the eyes of the world.

It is more urgent than ever to have an independent people’s movement to speak out on these issues and others and assert the values we know most Canadians share. I look forward to working with you this coming year.

Warmly,

Maude Barlow

Maude Barlow is the National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians.

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Imagine that you step out your door for the morning commute, but your street is flooded. Not with water, but with toxic bitumen from the tar sands.

This is precisely what happened in Mayflower, a suburb in Arkansas, when Exxon's Pegasus pipeline spilled more than 1 million litres of tar sands crude earlier this year. This may be the future facing communities along the route of TransCanada's recently announced Energy East pipeline.

The 4,400-kilometre Energy East pipeline would carry up to 1.1 million barrels of oil per day, including tar sands crude, from Alberta to New Brunswick. It is expected to lead to massive tanker exports from Quebec and the Atlantic coast to send crude to much larger and more profitable markets.

The Council of Canadians opposes the Energy East pipeline because it would pose serious threats to local water supplies, communities and coastal waters. It would promote the expansion of the tar sands, which contaminate the water, land and air of nearby communities, and stand in the way of the alternative energy future we need.

Which energy strategy do we want?
The Council of Canadians has called for a Canadian Energy Strategy guided by the principles of ensuring peoples' energy security and ecological sustainability. This strategy would prioritize meeting basic energy needs while dramatically improving energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy generation as we stop relying on fossil fuels. It would prioritize public and community-owned energy solutions.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and some provincial premiers, backed by the oil industry, are pushing for a different vision. Their energy strategy, which has been making headlines in the media recently, is about extracting and exporting natural resources for corporate profit regardless of the impacts on people and the environment. The Energy East pipeline is part of this strategy.

Pipelines assure tar sands expansion
TransCanada’s Energy East pipeline is a multi-use pipeline that will carry a variety of crudes including conventional crude and bakken oil, the crude that exploded in Lac Mégantic. It also includes tar sands bitumen refined in Alberta (syncrude) and diluted bitumen. Bitumen, produced in the tar sands, is so thick it needs to be diluted with toxic chemicals in order to be shipped through pipelines. This product is known as “dil-bit.”

The tar sands, Canada’s fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions, already produce 1.9 million barrels of bitumen daily. There are plans for a threefold increase in production in coming years. With plans for TransCanada’s Keystone XL pipeline to the Gulf...
Coast and Enbridge’s Gateway pipeline to the B.C. coast blocked by mass public protests, the oil industry and its allies in government are desperately trying to secure pipeline infrastructure to avoid bitumen production being literally landlocked, which would inevitably lead to massive profit losses.

**Pipeline safety in question**
The spill of more than 3.8 million litres of dil-bit in the Kalamazoo River in Michigan underscores how tar sands spills are exceptionally devastating. Conventional cleanup methods haven’t been able to recover the heavy crude that sank to the bottom of the river bed. Three years, and more than $800 million later, the river is still polluted.

The Energy East project would see the conversion of an existing gas pipeline – known as the Mainline – that runs from Saskatchewan to Quebec to carry crude oil. Under TransCanada’s proposal, the pipeline would be extended on both ends. This pipeline, like the Pegasus pipeline that flooded the suburb streets of Mayflower, was designed to carry a lighter substance.

According to a study by the National Petroleum Council for the U.S. Department of Energy, “pipelines operating outside of their design parameters such as those carrying commodities for which they were not initially designed, or high flow pipelines, are at the greatest risk of integrity issues in the future due to the nature of their operation.”

Evan Vokes, a former TransCanada engineer, recently testified at a Senate committee hearing about the industry’s lax safety standards, stating: “What I have documented from the pipeline industry is that the mix of politics and commercial interests has resulted in false public claims of exceptional industry practice when the reality is that industry struggles to comply with code and regulation.”

**Energy East: An export pipeline**
The attempt to use nation-building rhetoric to build support for this project rests in large part on the premise that it will meet Atlantic energy security needs. However, there is reason to believe that this pipeline is really meant to get the crude to Atlantic ports so that it can be exported. Energy East would see crude reach tidewater near Quebec City at the Gulf of St Lawrence, and near Saint John, New Brunswick, at the Bay of Fundy through a new ice-free deepwater port TransCanada and Irving Oil are building. Supertankers would carry diluted bitumen through these ecologically sensitive waters.

Once the crude reaches the oceans it would fetch higher world oil prices. This means the pipeline wouldn’t lead to lower pump costs for Eastern Canada. Instead, it would be up for grabs to the highest bidder. According to a senior economist at Scotiabank, Energy East may “provide a new avenue to exporting crude, light or blended bitumen” and it “could open an economic route to Europe, India and possibly China.”

Eastern refineries also have limited capacity to process tar sands dil-bit, requiring it to be exported for processing. There is also no assurance that crude refined in Quebec and Saint John will be prioritized for Eastern Canadians’ oil needs. According to a press release from Irving Oil’s Saint John refinery from early 2013: “The refinery exports over 80 per cent of its production to the U.S.” as refined products such as gasoline.

Newfoundland actually already produces enough oil to meet Atlantic Canadian oil needs, but it is exported. Any discussion about Atlantic energy security should consider redirecting these exports until we can transition off of fossil fuels.

**Energy insecurity and fracked gas**
Ironically, the Energy East pipeline may lead to a different energy shortage in Ontario and Quebec. A dispute is brewing between TransCanada and gas distributors including Union Gas, Enbridge and Gaz Métro over the proposed pipeline conversion from gas to oil. According to Gaz Métro’s Vice President, in peak wintertime the TransCanada Mainline meets 40 per cent of Quebec and Ontario’s natural gas needs. Industry representatives say switching the pipeline’s use would lead to shortages.

**Coast-to-coast pipeline opposition**
The real nation-building happening right now is the coast-to-coast grassroots opposition to tar sands pipelines.

With members, supporters and allies along the Energy East pipeline route, the Council of Canadians intends to build awareness and work with those who would be directly impacted by this project. We received national media attention responding to the project’s official announcement. We have been present at TransCanada’s open houses and will participate in the upcoming National Energy Board proceedings. We are working with communities along the route including Ottawa, Thunder Bay and Saint John. By doing this, we are building local and provincial campaigns. In other words – borrowing a line from a favourite fictional character of mine – this pipeline shall not pass!

Andrea Harden-Donahue is an Energy and Climate Justice Campaigner with the Council of Canadians. This article contains excerpts from an op-ed published in New Brunswick by Maude Barlow and Leticia Adair.
FRACKING
Our Future?

Hydraulic fracturing – or “fracking” as it is more commonly known – is a technique that involves the injection of millions of litres of water and thousands of litres of unidentified chemicals and sand underground at very high pressure to break up underlying shale rock formations and release natural gas below the surface.

So what exactly happens when you blast a toxic cocktail of water and chemicals into the ground? What effect do these highly pressurized fractures have on the land? Do the chemicals used in each frack stay in the wells, or do they seep and migrate, finding their way through cracks and crevices and into other nearby water sources?

There are many questions and concerns being raised about fracking, not only here in Canada, but around the world. While industry sees it as another way to pull natural gas from the earth, not a lot is known about the long-term effects of fracking.

But more and more people are asking questions, and demanding answers from governments that only minimally regulate the industry. With more stories emerging from people who can no longer drink or use the water in their homes, who are experiencing health concerns such as skin rashes and burns, nose bleeds and digestive issues, there is a growing movement to stop fracking altogether.

In this special section you will learn more about where fracking is happening in Canada and around the world, how the fracking industry is using trade agreements to push their “right” to frack, how communities are banding together to protect themselves, and how people have been successful in saying “no fracking way.”
Fracking Across Canada

**British Columbia** British Columbia is home to what’s known as the world’s “largest frack,” with shale gas reserves in the Horn River, Montney, Liard and Cordova basins located in the province’s northeastern corner. There have been more than 1,062 wells fracked in B.C. In 2010, over the course of 111 days, a gigantic frack took place at Two Island Lake in the Horn River Basin, with an average of 17 fracks per well, which used 5.6 million barrels of water, 111 million pounds of sand and massive quantities of unknown chemicals.

**Yukon** Community opposition to fracking was spurred by an application submitted by the Chinese company Northern Cross in 2010. There is currently no fracking underway in the Yukon, but Northern Cross has been conducting 3D seismic testing.

The Council of Yukon First Nations passed a resolution in July 2013 declaring traditional territories “frack-free.”

**Alberta** The Alberta Energy regulator says that 171,000 wells have been fracked in Alberta since the 1950s. There are 15 prospective shale gas formations in the province and five of these formations (Duvernay, Muskwa, Basal Banff/Exshaw, North Nordegg, and the Wilrich) may contain up 1,291 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of shale gas. The province could contain an additional 500 Tcf of coalbed methane (CBM). While CBM typically uses less fracking fluid than shale gas, the wells are not as deep, so fracking happens closer to the surface, heightening concerns about potential drinking water contamination.

**Saskatchewan** Fracking in Saskatchewan is almost exclusively for the extraction of the province’s oil reserves. Most fracking is concentrated in the Bakken oil play, which straddles the Canada-U.S. border. The area is estimated to hold 200-300 billion barrels of oil, with potentially 1.3 billion barrels in Saskatchewan alone.

**The Northwest Territories** The Canol shale formation of the Sahtu area in the central Mackenzie Valley is believed to be one of the largest potential sources of oil shale on the continent, with estimates of between three and five billion barrels of recoverable oil. Oil and gas corporations Imperial Oil, Shell, ConocoPhillips, MGM Energy and Husky have invested $628 million since 2011 to lease 15 parcels in the central Mackenzie region for exploration. In July 2013, it was announced that an additional 10 parcels of land would be made available for lease. There is also potential for fracking in the southwest NWT, in the Fort Liard region of the territory.

**Manitoba** Fracking for oil is confined to a small corner in southwestern Manitoba. Since 2006, a total of 1,978 horizontal wells have been drilled. However, there is little public information on the chemicals and the amount of water used in the fracking process. The Manitoba government is working on new regulations for the fracking industry and creating a “FracFocus” website where fracking companies can “volunteer” information about the chemicals and water they use.
Ontario While there is presently no fracking underway in Ontario, the Ontario Geological Survey (OGS) has highlighted the shale gas potential in the Ordovician Shale formations located in southern Ontario. The OGS drilled in 11 locations, including St. Joseph, Little Current, Wiarton, Bruce, Chatham, Port Stanley, Halton, Mount Forest, Imperial, Lincoln, Pickering and Russell.

Ontario borders four of the five Great Lakes. Developing these shale formations could have serious implications for the Lakes, Georgian Bay and local watersheds.

Quebec In May, 2013, Quebec’s Environment Minister tabled Bill 37 which, if passed, would impose a moratorium on fracking in the Lowlands of the St. Lawrence River for up to five years. The proposed legislation would revoke all drilling licences and prohibit new ones. Bill 37 follows years of opposition to fracking in Quebec. In 2008 there was a burst of exploration activity in the St. Lawrence River Lowlands for the Utica shale formation, with 31 wells fracked. This sparked significant local opposition and prompted dozens of municipalities to pass resolutions banning fracking.

New Brunswick The provincial government is moving forward with fracking despite growing public opposition. Most gas resources in the province are trapped in shale formations. There are currently 49 fracked wells in the province.

People from across the Atlantic region have gathered in support of the Mi’kmaq in Elsipogtog as the community continues to block shale gas exploration by SWN Resources Canada.

Prince Edward Island The Department of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs governs fracking in the province. As of August 2013, there are no fracking operations underway, however, up to 40 per cent of the province could be exposed to fracking in the future. Some experts believe there is a potential of 7.6 Tcf of coalbed methane in the ground on P.E.I. Local residents have joined together to form a diverse coalition under the banner “Don’t Frack PEI.”

Newfoundland and Labrador Shoal Point Energy submitted a proposal to perform onshore-to-offshore fracking for oil exploration in several sites along the west coast of Newfoundland. Black Spruce Energy has since negotiated a farm-in agreement for exploration with Shoal Point. Public concern has focused on one location in particular – Rocky Harbour, which is fully encircled by Gros Morne National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Nova Scotia In early 2011, the Nova Scotia government announced it would be reviewing fracking. The review was extended in April 2012 for an additional two years.

In 2008 fracking occurred in the Kennebecook and Noel region in Hants County. Triangle Petroleum Resources had several permits that allowed fracking and water withdrawals from local rivers. The lack of information related to this project brought people together in the coalition known as NOPRAC.

Lake Ainslie, Nova Scotia’s second largest freshwater lake, was also under threat from fracking operations. In September 2012, the Mi’kmaq Warriors Society and other Indigenous communities set up a partial blockade on the Canso Causeway to highlight the dangers of oil and gas drilling.
Many Council of Canadians chapters took part in the first Global Frackdown in 2012. This year’s event, happening in October, will see communities around the world speaking out against fracking.

Fracking is spreading like wildfire, not only in Canada, but also all over the world. Yet growing alongside the rapidly expanding industry is a grassroots movement to ban fracking and protect water sources, public health and the environment.

The United States has one of the largest shale gas reserves and is leading the fracking boom. Companies like Encana are breaking records with the amount of water used for fracking operations from the Great Lakes Basin.

In August, Americans Against Fracking – a coalition of environmental and consumer organizations – delivered 650,000 public comments calling for a ban against fracking on public lands. In May 2012 Vermont became the first state to ban fracking. There have been local measures to stop fracking passed in 20 states, including California, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia. The Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force and the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa have also instituted bans.

New York State has been a hotbed of activity in the fight to ban fracking. In addition to having a state-wide moratorium, New York municipalities have passed more than 200 local resolutions against fracking, by far the most passed in any one state in the U.S.

In Mexico, fracking is underway with a few exploration wells along the U.S. border. While the Mexican government currently controls energy provision in the country, it has proposed energy reforms that encourage the participation of private companies. Fracking proponents often argue that without private sector participation, Mexico will not be able to take advantage of its shale gas reserves.

The Alianza Mexicana contra el Fracking was launched in August, creating a coalition of 16 environmental, consumer and human rights organizations, including the Council of Canadians’ Blue Planet Project. The coalition is calling for a fracking ban.

In Europe, France and Bulgaria have banned fracking, while Ireland, the Czech Republic, Denmark and North Rhine-Westphalia state in Germany have implemented moratoriums. German brewers made international headlines this spring when they warned that fracking could harm the beer industry.

Romania’s government is reconsidering the future of fracking in the country. Romanians have held frequent and fervent protests against the practice, and Bulgarians crossed the border in June to join their neighbours in calling for a ban. Strong community opposition, coupled with the myth of a natural gas glut driving down prices in the U.S., has cast doubt on shale gas development in Europe. Although Poland is estimated to have one of the largest unconventional gas reserves in Europe, gas companies have recently gotten cold feet, casting doubt on the future of fracking there.

Despite community protests, South Africa recently gave the green light to fracking companies by lifting a moratorium on fracking that had been in place since April 2011.

China has a high number of shale gas reserves and has moved full steam ahead with fracking. Concerns were raised recently when gas companies began fracking in Sichuan, an earthquake-prone province in southwestern China. The threats fracking poses to water and public health are compounded in China given the country’s existing water crisis. Nearly half of China’s rivers are so polluted they are unfit for drinking.

Communities around the world are joining a global call to ban fracking as part of the annual “Global Frackdown.” During the first Global Frackdown, which was held last September, more than 200 community actions in more than 20 countries challenged fracking and its impact on water, the environment and public health. Communities around the world organized rallies, street theatre actions, and meetings with politicians – all to be a part of the call for a global ban on fracking.

This year’s Global Frackdown took place on October 19. We hope you were a part of it!

Emma Lui is a Water Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.
There Is No “Right” to Frack

by Stuart Trew

When the people of Quebec spoke out against fracking, the provincial government listened. Quebec put a moratorium on the controversial and dangerous method for extracting hard-to-reach natural gas until the environmental impacts could be studied.

As we have highlighted in this special section, fracking uses enormous amounts of water and sand, mixed with toxic chemicals, which are forced into the ground at high pressure to fracture shale rock or coal beds to release natural gas or oil. The process is linked to earthquakes and water pollution. More importantly, fracking creates an illusion of energy security while actually worsening the climate crisis, which is why communities around the world are trying to stop it.

You would think the Quebec government would be able to implement measures to protect its people and their environment – but a U.S. fracking company called Lone Pine Resources thinks otherwise.

Lone Pine wanted to frack for gas under the St. Lawrence River and has threatened to sue Canada under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The company is demanding $250 million in compensation for Quebec’s moratorium, which it says violates the company’s “right” to frack.

Earlier this year, the Council of Canadians joined with other organizations to launch a petition demanding that energy company Lone Pine Resources drop its $250 million NAFTA lawsuit.

The petition’s sponsors – the Council of Canadians, the Réseau québécois sur l’Intégration continentale (RQIC), Sierra Club U.S., FLOW (For Love of Water), Eau Secours! and Amies de la Terre – sent letters to Lone Pine with signatures from more than 3,000 people calling on Lone Pine to drop their NAFTA suit.

“People across Canada and the United States are outraged that a company would claim it has a ‘right’ to frack under trade deals like NAFTA, and that we might have to pay Lone Pine Resources not to drill in the St. Lawrence,” said Emma Lui, a Water Campaigner with the Council of Canadians.

“There should be no ‘right’ to frack, or to dig a mine, or lay a pipeline. Investment treaties cannot be allowed to override community decisions.”

“Governments must have the flexibility to say ‘no’ to fracking and other environmentally destructive practices without trade rules getting in the way,” said Ilana Solomon, Trade Representative with the Sierra Club. “The fact that a U.S. oil and gas corporation is bringing a trade case against the government of Canada over a law intended to protect the health and well-being of its citizens shows just how backward our trade rules have become.”

Quebec’s moratorium

In 2011, the Quebec government placed a moratorium on all new drilling permits until a strategic environmental evaluation was completed. When the current Quebec government was elected last year, it extended the moratorium to all exploration and development of shale gas in the province. Last fall, Lone Pine indicated that it planned to challenge Quebec’s fracking moratorium. Instead of going to court, the Calgary-based company is using its incorporation in Delaware to access the investment protection chapter of NAFTA, which is available only to U.S. and Mexican companies, to challenge the Quebec moratorium in front of a paid and largely unaccountable investment tribunal. The company says the Quebec moratorium is “arbitrary” and “capricious,” and that it deprives Lone Pine of its right to profit from fracking for natural gas in Quebec’s Saint Lawrence Valley.

“Lone Pine must drop its scandalous lawsuit against this legitimate policy of the Quebec government, which has just been listening to its people,” says Pierre-Yves Serinet, coordinator of the Quebec Network on Continental Integration (RQIC).

In an unfortunate but possibly fortuitous move, Lone Pine executives have decided to ignore the public outcry and move ahead with their $250-million NAFTA lawsuit. The decision is bound to draw global attention to the injustices of investor-state arbitration and its abuse by oil and gas companies to hold back serious efforts to address climate change.

All communities, including Quebec, have a right to decide whether or not they want fracking. Companies like Lone Pine must not be allowed to abuse investor rights in treaties like NAFTA. We shouldn’t have to pay to protect ourselves and our environment. Communities, not private firms, should have the final say on fracking and other projects that threaten water sources, the environment and public health – and there should be no penalty for saying “no.”

Stuart Trew is the Trade Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.
Fracked Gas Is Coming down the Pipe

by Maryam Adrangi

Industry and government representatives were working closely together in the lead-up to the B.C. election this past spring, resulting in a surge in proposals to expand the fossil fuel industry in the province.

Oil and gas investors said B.C.'s election “was the single most important election to the energy landscape in all of North America in several years.” Because of this, communities in northeastern B.C. are now inundated by energy-intensive projects, particularly fracking. And there is no slow-down in sight.

British Columbia is already home to one of the largest fracking regions in North America, which includes the Horn River, Montney, and Liard basins, and there are more than 1,000 fracking wells in the province. Take these numbers, add in the fact that the province wants to frack more, that there are 10 proposals for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) plants on the coast, and that the Harper government has close ties with the energy industry, and you have a recipe for unparalleled energy development. Everything is lining up to move fracked gas to the coast, condense it to liquid at an LNG plant, put it on tankers, and ship it out.

The fracking process is an incredibly energy- and water-intensive method of extracting gas. This is why fracked gas has been called “unconventional gas,” much like tar sands crude is called “unconventional oil” because it is more energy- and water-intensive to extract than conventional oil. Fracking is essentially B.C.’s equivalent to the tar sands. The province is beholden to the fracking industry for financial profits and shows little regard for fracking’s environmental and health impacts.

Over the past several years, there has been increasing awareness of how destructive and dangerous the tar sands are, and there has been a corresponding groundswell of opposition. While tar sands opposition began as simply fighting mining projects, more recently, people have been working to stop tar sands pipelines from being built through their communities.

Opposition to pipelines has emerged across North America. First Nations have united against the Northern Gateway pipeline by signing on to the “Save the Fraser Declaration,” which states that communities will not let tar sands pipelines or tankers through their traditional territories. People in southern Ontario and in Quebec have led fights against pumping stations that are part of the Line 9 expansion and reversal project. And landowners and students in Texas have been chaining themselves to machinery, setting up “tree-sits,” and occupying land in order to stop construction of the Keystone XL pipeline.

A pipeline boom in B.C.

Similar actions may happen in the fights against fracking expansion, and in particular, against the several proposed pipelines that would transport fracked gas from northeastern B.C. to coastal LNG plants for export.

The Pacific Trail pipeline would bring fracked gas through northern B.C. The pipeline, which has already been approved by the province, follows much of the same route as the Northern Gateway pipeline, which suggests that industry is looking at this path as an “energy corridor.” The fact that there are other major fracking export pipeline proposals from Pembina, Spectra, and Coastal Gas Link that follow – for the most part – the same route, confirms this idea.

But communities along the route are saying “no” to pipelines. The Unist’ot’en Clan of the Wet’suwet’en First Nation have set up log cabins, permaculture gardens and pit houses along the route of the proposed Pacific Trail pipeline. Clan members have also evicted pipeline surveyors from the territory. Every year the Wet’suwet’en host an action camp, inviting people to come and see the land where they hunt and the river from which they drink and fish. People can see that the so-called “energy corridor” will have serious impacts on the land and water the Wet’suwet’en are protecting.

People’s collaborative efforts to slow work down can be an effective strategy to stop industrial expansion. With delays to surveying and land access being denied, the Pacific Trail Partnership had to develop a new pipeline route and request an extension to the terms of the project’s environmental assessment because the company was unable to start construction before the original deadline.

Industry may be adamant about pushing through fracking pipelines, but communities are also adamant about protecting their land and water for future generations. During our “No Pipelines, No Tankers” speaking tour last year, Council of Canadians National Chairperson Maude Barlow said: “Pipelines are the arteries and the blood lines of the tar sands.”

Similarly, pipelines are the bloodlines and arteries of the gas industry. While we build community understanding about fracking we are going to see a powerful groundswell of opposition intent on stopping the pumping flow of fracked gas.

Maryam Adrangi is an Energy and Climate Justice Campaigner with the Council of Canadians.
Indigenous Perspectives on Fracking and Water

Pikto’l Sa’kej Muise (Victor Muise) is a Mi’kmaq from Bay St. George on the west coast of Newfoundland. He is involved in traditional teaching and is a certified prospector, and he has been involved in his community’s fight against fracking.

Our people have been here for a long time. We come from an oral tradition and learned our culture and knowledge by carefully listening to what our Elders and other people say. To survive within the spirit of our traditions, respect for the environment and Mother Earth, we listen and determine the truth of what has been said by reflecting.

I understand that the Mi’kmaq People and other Aboriginal peoples are the custodians of the land and the water. What we do to Mother Earth, we do to ourselves. We are not outside the environment; we are the environment. We learn through our teachings that we have to make decisions for the next seven generations. This principle is fundamental to our ways and how we see the world.

Today we treat the land poorly by fracking for oil and gas. What we do to the land, we do to ourselves. When I talk about fracking with the youth, they express their deep concerns. A lot has been said about chemicals, well contamination and the lack of regulations. Some of the youth are well educated and have researched hydraulic fracturing and believe that this is not good for the land, our people and the animals. We have learned in this process that other Aboriginal organizations around the Gulf of St. Lawrence have voted for a moratorium on fracking to protect their rights to safe water and clean land.

The Mi’kmaq people I talk to have problems understanding how governments (in Ottawa and in St. John’s) can make such important decisions without consultation with our people. Governments know that the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that there is a “duty to consult” with Aboriginal peoples before important projects go ahead. They do not have the moral authority, the mandate or the support from the people to frack. Governments should also know that allowing consultants and oil companies to make short, simple, limited, unclear presentations to the Aboriginal peoples in the area cannot be considered sufficient consultation in any court of law.

Amy Sock is a self-described “woman warrior” from the Elsipogtog First Nation in New Brunswick. She describes the tension she feels since the Harper government passed omnibus budget legislation that reduced or removed many of Canada’s environmental protections.

When I was a child everything around me amazed me – the ladybugs, the long-legged spiders, the river and the sand. I grew up having a great-grandfather who made baskets and was an avid fisherman, just like my 85-year-old Mi’kmaq grandfather. As you may imagine, I ate mainly fish: mackerel, salmon, lobsters, clams, eels, bass, trout and smelts are my favourite. As a forty-something Native woman (Lnuisk), my heart is in sync with Mother Earth. I cannot explain how I feel properly in our English language. It’s like the blood running through my whole body revives and the beauty of it all engulfs me each time I fish, camp, pick berries or see an eagle.

Never would I have thought I’d be referred to as an “activist,” “terrorist” or “a radical,” but since Canada passed the omnibus budget bills, those are names I now have.

The contents of these bills affect the land and water. The regulations previously in place for centuries were replaced by ones that make water, lands and resources like oil and gas easier industry to access.

The changes in the bills made it my personal duty to save our water. I was happy to find I am not alone in this battle. Our numbers are growing – we have been joined by many kind-hearted people, the English, the French, and the Acadians, and people from many parts of the world are watching and praying for us. They come to us in great numbers with kindness and gratitude and an open mind to try and understand our ways.

For as long as I shall breathe, water and its safety will be my problem. For we Lnuisk do not own the land, we are here to protect Mother Earth. It’s our duty. And our Aboriginal and treaty rights – which are legally binding laws – say so as well.
Winning Community Fights Against Fracking

Across Canada, people are banding together to say “no” to fracking. In recent months, Atlantic Canada has been a hotspot for this kind of grassroots community action.

Inverness County Council in Nova Scotia made history by passing a by-law that banned fracking within the county. The by-law recognized the precautionary principle to protect the rights of individuals, and looked at other regulations that would be contravened by allowing hydraulic fracturing. The Inverness County Chapter of the Council of Canadians played a key role in moving the by-law forward. Chapter members said a transparent and inclusive public consultation process allowed the by-law to eventually earn overwhelming support in the county.

This past summer, Kent County, New Brunswick, became a beacon for fracking opposition when Texas-based Southwestern Energy attempted to perform seismic testing throughout the region. With already-established community groups adding their voices to the newly mobilized members of the Elsipogtog First Nation, the community opposition has been strong. Media coverage often focused on the people who were willing to stand in front of the thumper trucks used for seismic testing, and there were also days of solidarity actions when hundreds of people would visit the Sacred Fire and encampment. Mi’kmaq, Acadians and Anglophones have all worked together. The company left the province in August, but recently returned to complete seismic testing. The Elsipotog Band Council has issued an eviction notice to the company.

Protecting water has been key to these fights. For example, when Atlantic Industrial Services (AIS) applied to Colchester County Council in Nova Scotia for permission to release “treated” fracking waste into the local sewage system (which would result in the fluid eventually entering the Bay of Fundy), thousands of people wrote letters of objection and voiced their concerns at public meetings. The overwhelming response was difficult to ignore and the County rejected AIS’s application.

Atlantic Canadians are not anti-development, and we are keen to become energy self-sufficient. But we are also able to gauge when the risks of energy extraction outweigh the potential benefits, and we have been coming together to protect our water and our communities at every stage of the fracking process.

Angela Giles is the Atlantic Regional Organizer for the Council of Canadians.

5 Things You Can Do to Stop Fracking

1. **Form a group.** There is power in numbers. Join with other groups – youth, environmental, Indigenous and other groups – in your community to strengthen your campaign.

2. **Sign the “Don’t frack with our water” petition** at www.canadians.org. (Download it and get others to sign it too!)

3. **Pass a resolution.** Want to have fracking banned in your community? Visit your municipal council and ask council members to pass a resolution against it.

4. **Talk to politicians.** Let your municipal, provincial and federal politicians know what you think.

5. **Make it public.** Write a letter to the editor, speak to the media, or hold an event to make a public statement against fracking.

Visit www.canadians.org/fracking for more action ideas and resources. Let us know what you are doing in your community and we will add it to our “Fracker Tracker.”

Support was strong as Atlantic Council of Canadians chapter activists took part in the 2012 Global Frackdown to say “no” to fracking near Lake Ainslie.
Chapter
Activist Profile

Bharat Chandramouli
Victoria, British Columbia

Victoria, British Columbia, is located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island off Canada’s Pacific coast on the traditional territories of several Coast Salish First Nations. Bounded by the ocean on three sides, and known for its beautiful, rugged scenery, Victoria is home to many students and retirees who help make up a strong activist community.

How and why did you get involved with the Council of Canadians?
I was new to Canada and visited a Council of Canadians table on Earth Day. I was impressed with the breadth and intersectionality of the issues they were involved in and decided that the Council of Canadians would be a great place to start being an activist on environmental and social justice issues in Canada.

Tell me a bit about the Victoria Chapter. What issues is the chapter involved in?
The Victoria Chapter has been around for nearly 20 years and is active in many areas, including water infrastructure privatization, pollution, trade and environmental justice issues. Victoria has a very developed activist community, so the Victoria Chapter chooses to do a lot of work in coalition and solidarity with other organizations of similar mindset. Victoria is also lucky to have a relatively progressive population and city council, which means organizing can be done in consultation with governing structures, and not always in opposition.

What issues are important to you personally as an activist?
The urgent need for humanity to transition to a carbon emissions–free way of life and the changes our society needs to make to eradicate social/colonial injustice and income and other inequalities fuel most of my activist fire.

Victoria is a Blue Community—how did the chapter help make this happen?
We invited city councillors to our AGM focused on Blue Communities, and worked actively with one of them to draft and champion a strong Blue Community resolution. Most councillors were on board right away, and while there was some pushback from Nestlé, we had our members write to city council urging them to hold strong. We coordinated the entire initiative with CUPE so their members were active in talking to council as well.

How has your activism as a chapter had an impact on your community? What successes have you had?
We have been successful in getting strong Blue Community and anti-CETA resolutions passed through city council. We have worked in concert with many organizations on local issues such as development in the wilderness, the privatization of sewage infrastructure, colonization and more. I see our role in Victoria as a strong ally to other social and environmental justice groups.

What advice would you give to someone who wants to get involved?
Come with an open mind, prepare to bring some energy, but be aware of your privilege and how it affects others around the room. Work in coalition with others and try to organize from as broad a base as you can. If you are a settler on this land, be aware of the colonial structures that privilege you and try not to perpetuate them. Finally, this is supposed to be fulfilling. If organizing with a particular group of people is stressful, be sure to stop and question why that is.

For more information about how to join a chapter in your area, visit our website at www.canadians.org or call us toll-free at 1-800-387-7177.
Council of Canadians chapters are active in communities across Canada protecting water and public health care, challenging unfair trade deals and standing up for democracy. Here are a few highlights:

**Water Forum**
The Toronto Chapter organized their 2013 Great Lakes Commons Water Forum in April. Groups in attendance included the National Farmers Union of Ontario, On the Commons, Great Lakes Waterkeepers, and the International Institute of Concern for Public Health. Council of Canadians National Chairperson Maude Barlow was also in attendance and delivered an inspiring speech to the large crowd.

The Council of Canadians launched its “Great Lakes Need Great Friends” speaking tour in Toronto in the spring of 2012. This Water Forum provided another opportunity to talk about the fragility of the Great Lakes and how the Lakes are part of a shared commons.

**Public health care talks**
The Saint John chapter organized a public meeting on health care at the beginning of May to talk about the urgent need for a 2014 Health Care Accord in the lead-up to the Council of the Federation meeting for premiers this summer. Many Council of Canadians chapter members were in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, in July during the Council of the Federation meeting. Health care groups from across the country came together for events including a shadow summit, workshops, a film screening, and a rally that brought thousands of people into the streets to call on premiers to strengthen public health care.

**Marching Against Monsanto**
Several Council of Canadians chapters took part in the March against Monsanto Everywhere Day of Action on May 25.

Monsanto’s genetically modified alfalfa could be registered for use in Canada soon, but because alfalfa is a perennial plant that is pollinated by bees, genetically modified alfalfa will inevitably cross-pollinate with non-genetically modified and organic alfalfa, threatening the livelihoods of family farmers across Canada.

**Tar Sands Healing Walk**
This summer hundreds of people – including many chapter activists – came together for the Tar Sands Healing Walk. We joined First Nations and Métis at this gathering that focused on healing the environment and gave support to people who are dealing with the environmental impacts of tar sands expansion.

According to Maryam Adrangi, an Energy and Climate Justice Campaigner for the Council, it was an opportunity to build relationships with those directly impacted by the tar sands. She said the event was a very powerful and moving experience, which took place on the territory of the Fort McMurray First Nation in Northern Alberta.

**Challenging the Canada-China FIPA**
In August, Brenda Sayers of the Hupacasath First Nation toured Ontario and Quebec to share information and rally support for the Hupacasath court case which challenged the authority of the federal government to sign the far-reaching Canada-China Foreign Investment Protection Agreement (FIPA) without consulting First Nations. The Council of Canadians and its chapters helped organize the tour with Idle No More, Leadnow, Common Frontiers and others.

FIPA will expose Canada to lawsuits from Chinese companies and investors that claim their profits have been affected by government decisions such as environmental legislation, resource conservation measures, or actions that fulfilled constitutional responsibilities with respect to First Nations.

**Protecting Fish Lake from mining**
The environmental assessment process for Taseko Mines’ proposed “New Prosperity Mine” wrapped up in August. Members of our Williams Lake Chapter were there to speak out against the proposal. The Williams Lake Chapter has been working in support of the Tsilhqot’in Nation’s campaign to protect Teztan Biny (Fish Lake) from impacts from Taseko’s toxic mining waste.

Indigenous people from the Tsilhqot’in Nation have made it very clear that they do not support this mine. They want to preserve their traditions and protect the lands and waters within their territories for future generations. Any development in this pristine region will cause significant damage to the local ecosystem.

**Welcome!**
We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest chapter in Moncton, New Brunswick!

Philippe-A Charbonneau is the Political Team Administrative Assistant for the Council of Canadians.
CETA: What’s in the deal?

by Stuart Trew

By October, negotiations between Canada and the European Union on a corporate rights treaty called the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement – or CETA – will be four years old. The Harper government’s failure to get a deal done is a testament to the success of our campaign and others to educate the public and elected officials about the dangers in the agreement.

On the other hand, as you read this, Canada and the EU may have announced a conclusion to CETA negotiations, or that they have a “deal in principle.” If that’s the case, we will be pushing hard to ensure the public is given the opportunity to see, change and ultimately reject CETA if the deal is not in the public interest.

The Council of Canadians has been front and centre in the campaign to expose and challenge the Canada-EU negotiations, thanks in large part to the help of our members and volunteer activists.

For example, there was a huge response from Council of Canadians members and online activists to a CETA petition, which we delivered to Brussels in September to the President of the European Parliament. The petition, which was signed by more than 5,000 people, tells members of the European Parliament that our federal government does not have our support for CETA.

Through its participation in the Trade Justice Network, the Council has also been taking that message to provincial governments participating in CETA negotiations. The network sent a letter to all premiers and opposition leaders this summer demanding a public review of the EU deal before any province can approve it.

Over the past four years, the Council has campaigned on four of what we consider to be CETA’s worst elements.

Public procurement
CETA will ban “buy local” policies that can help us re-localize our economy, protect the environment and create jobs. Cities as big as Toronto, Victoria, Hamilton and Red Deer have asked to be exempted from these ridiculous CETA rules. We will continue to engage our local governments to make sure all municipalities are informed about the results of any concluded agreement and have the opportunity to opt out of CETA, or at least its procurement chapter.

Water services
Leaked CETA texts revealed that Canada was unwilling to exclude drinking water, sanitation and other water-related services from an investment chapter that would lock in existing privatization and encourage more private delivery of water services. The EU and its member states were requesting a complete carve-out for their water services, which would help shield public decisions related to water services (for example, the re-municipalization of privatized systems, or the creation of new public water utilities) from trade or corporate lawsuits. We will vigorously oppose any EU deal that threatens our public water systems.

Longer monopolies on pharmaceutical patents
It is almost certain that the Harper government granted more patent protection to brand name drug companies, as demanded by the EU and Big Pharma lobby groups in Canada. The EU will make no changes to its own patent system, showing just how unbalanced CETA will be. According to a 2012 federal assessment that the Harper government tried to suppress, these changes could cost Canada up to $2 billion annually. More than two-thirds of people in Canada oppose extending patent terms in CETA. Parliament and the public should have the right to revoke any changes promised by the Harper government in the final EU deal.

Investor “rights”:
Canada is facing nearly $2.5 billion worth of corporate lawsuits under NAFTA’s investment protection chapter, including one from an oil and gas company against Quebec’s moratorium on fracking and another from pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly against Canada’s legal system for reviewing patents. Australia, South Africa, India and a dozen Latin American countries either have stopped signing investment treaties that give corporations the right to sue governments for public policies they don’t like, or are rejecting existing treaties. Our petition to the EU Parliament asked that these corporate “rights” be taken out of CETA.

As you can see, CETA is a lot like one of Harper’s omnibus budget bills. It’s one-tenth trade and nine-tenths ideological or pro-corporate changes to public policy that will undermine our ability to create and improve public services, protect the environment, keep health costs low, and create good local jobs. It will be a huge assault to democracy if, after agreeing to all these changes in closed-door talks with EU negotiators, Prime Minister Harper then gives us no opportunity to decide whether the deal is really in our best interests.

Stuart Trew is the Trade Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.
Blue Future: A new water ethic
by Maude Barlow

We humans have allowed the planet’s fresh water to be used as a resource for the modern world we have built, rather than seeing it as the essential element in a living ecosystem. It seems very clear to me that we need to change our relationship to water, and we need to do it quickly. We need to find out what makes water sick and what makes it well again and to do all in our power to heal and restore the waterways and watersheds of our ecosystems. Not only must we reject the market model for our water future, we must also put ourselves at the service of undoing what we have done to the natural world and hope that it is not too late.

It is time to learn some humility. We must adopt a new water ethic that puts water protection and restoration at the centre of the laws and policies we enact. What would our cities look like if we no longer paved over rivers and streams but instead built around and celebrated them? What would agriculture policy look like if we had laws with teeth (as they do in northern Germany) preventing food-producing activities from harming the local water systems? What would trade policy look like if the true costs of virtual water loss were factored into the cost of production? What would energy policy look like if we considered the destruction of fresh water? How would we look at water diversion and dams if we accepted that rivers need to flow to remain healthy?

Conservation is a key component of a water ethic and relatively easy for us to adopt. When my grandchildren turn off the tap as they brush their teeth, I know they are being taught to care for water. The Global Water Policy Project’s Sandra Postel, who has been sounding the alarm about water for decades, says that measures to conserve, recycle, and more efficiently use water have enabled many places to contain their water demands and avoid – even if only temporarily – an ecological reckoning. She notes tried-and-true measures such as thrifty irrigation techniques, water-saving plumbing fixtures, investment in infrastructure to stop water loss through leaking pipes, native landscaping, and wastewater recycling as cost-effective ways to reduce the amount of water required to grow food, produce material goods, and meet household needs. She adds that the conservation potential of these measures has barely been tapped.

But something is still missing from this prescription, she argues in an essay for the American Prospect, something less tangible than low-flow showerheads and drip irrigation. That something has to do with modern society’s disconnect from nature and from water’s fundamental role as the basis of life. “In our technologically sophisticated world, we no longer grasp the need for the wild river, the blackwater swamp, or even the diversity of species collectively performing nature’s work. . . . Overall, we have been quick to assume rights to use water but slow to recognize obligations to preserve and protect it.” She says the essence of a water ethic is to make the protection of freshwater ecosystems a central goal in all that we do.

The adoption of such an ethic would shift human activity away from the strictly utilitarian approach to water management towards an integrated, holistic approach that views people and water as interconnected parts of a greater whole. “Instead of asking how we can further control and manipulate rivers, lakes, and streams to meet our ever-growing demands, we would ask how we can best satisfy human needs while accommodating the ecological requirements of freshwater ecosystems,” Postel argues. This would lead us to deeper questions of human values, “in particular how to narrow the wide gap between the haves and have-nots within a healthy ecosystem.”

Canadian geologist and writer Jamie Linton promotes the concept of the “hydro-social cycle,” a process in which flows of water reflect human affairs and human affairs are enlivened by water. “The task, already begun, is to put the hydrosocial cycle to work in helping promote social equity and environmental sustainability not just in cities, but wherever intervention in the hydrologic cycle has produced inequitable or uneven access to water and water services.”

This excerpt is from Maude Barlow’s new book Blue Future: Protecting Water for People and the Planet. Want to help ensure a blue future for us all? Support the Council of Canadians’ water campaign by becoming a monthly donor, or by increasing your current monthly donation, and receive a free copy signed by Maude! Contact Dana at 1-800-387-7177 ext 254 or dchapskie@canadians.org for more information.
There are 2.3 million fuel bundles – each one weighing 24 kilograms – sitting in temporary storage facilities in Canada. Packed neatly, they would completely fill six full-sized hockey rinks from the surface of the ice to the top of the boards. And all of it – 46,000 tonnes in all – will be dangerously radioactive for hundreds of thousands of years.

What to do about all this nuclear waste – Canada’s radioactive legacy from more than 40 years of nuclear power generation in Ontario, New Brunswick and Quebec – is a problem of staggering proportions. And as Canada’s six remaining nuclear reactors continue to pump out 85,000 more radioactive bundles of waste each year, it’s a problem that’s only getting worse.

For residents in a handful of communities in Ontario and Saskatchewan, this issue hits close to home. Their communities are being targeted for what the nuclear industry says is the solution to the problem: a permanent, centralized underground dump for all of Canada’s current and future nuclear waste.

At the centre of it all is an organization most Canadians have never heard of: the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO). Made up of members of Canada’s nuclear industry, since 2002 the NWMO has been tasked with finding what it calls “an informed and willing community” to be Canada’s permanent nuclear waste dump. Since the site selection process began in 2010, 21 communities have expressed interest and 15 are currently in the NWMO’s screening process.

But residents of northern Saskatchewan, where three of the communities being targeted for the dump are located – English River First Nation, Pinehouse, and Creighton – say that their communities are anything but willing, and they’re putting up a fight in Saskatchewan to stop the dump through an inspiring network of northern residents called the Committee for Future Generations.

"This isn’t the first time northerners have been exposed to danger from the nuclear conglomerate," says Marius Paul, a Denesuline from the English River First Nation. "When uranium mining was first being introduced to the north, those that were able to get a sense of what was happening were opposed, but it got pushed through in much the same way this nuclear waste project is being forced on us."
waste repository is being pushed, with the industry claiming that it educated and consulted the people. It’s the same story with Indigenous peoples all over the world – it’s all smoke and mirrors.”

Those fighting the dump in northern Saskatchewan argue that while the NWMO – and even their own elected representatives – talk about consultation and education with community members to help them make a decision about whether or not they want a dump, the reality on the ground is completely different.

“Education involves presenting or supporting research of all information and allowing participants to make their own informed decision without fear of rejection or intimidation,” says Doreen Docken, a Métis educator who lives in Pinehouse’s neighbouring community of Beauval. “To date, the nuclear industry has provided no information to our communities regarding the risk of storing nuclear waste.”

“Our communities are being told to shut up and listen,” adds Fred Pederson, an Elder living in the community of Pinehouse. “We are not allowed to research and educate ourselves of the truth, or share the truth of the danger associated with storing nuclear waste. The people of Pinehouse are opposed to bringing nuclear waste here – 60 per cent of the community signed a petition opposing nuclear waste – but village administration will not acknowledge the petition. The NWMO has bribed our administration with money and promises of jobs. Signs that we have made and put up saying ‘No to nuclear waste’ keep getting torn down. Our rights and freedoms have been removed from us.”

John Smerek, a local business owner in Pinehouse, agrees that the so-called consultation process is more of an all-out propaganda effort, and that it’s having serious impacts in the community.

“The community of Pinehouse has been divided and split since the NWMO has been allowed to trespass into our community,” Smerek says. “There is no healthy debate with the elected administration in this regard as the administration has taken it upon itself to move forward to support the nuclear waste issue without consulting the people of Pinehouse. Rather, the leaders alone, with the NWMO, have profiled all people who ask about the risk, referring to us as an opposing minority. And the NWMO and [uranium corporations] Cameco and Areva have been pushing money into our community for events and projects. That makes it hard for us as the Committee for Future Generations to compete with the industry’s agenda.”

Members of the Committee say that the economic challenges in these isolated, mostly Indigenous communities are being used as leverage by the nuclear industry with the usual promises of jobs and economic stimulus.

“Like other First Nations communities that have been pushed into a corner with little economic development, we are being forced into a ‘take it or suffer poverty’ situation,” says English River First Nation member Candyce Paul. “With the passing of the omnibus bills over the last two years we see that our lands and waters are the target for resource extraction and the dumping ground for everything toxic and radioactive. There is no accountability to keep these corporations from turning our homelands into wastelands and permanently destroying our ability to develop any real sustainable economy while maintaining our cultural integrity on our own land.”

But despite the economic blackmail, false information and intimidation, members of the Committee for Future Generations say they will never allow a dump to be built in their communities, and they’re rallying support from around the province in their fight.

The Committee has collected more than 12,000 signatures on a petition calling on the Saskatchewan government to ban the transportation of storage of nuclear waste within its borders. And they’re building a network of activists in their northern communities and partnering with supporters in the south of the province and around the world to oppose not just the dump, but the entire nuclear industry.

“Although our immediate goal is to stop nuclear waste from coming to Saskatchewan, we realize that for every day a nuclear reactor is in operation anywhere in the world, more nuclear waste piles up, deepening the crisis,” says Max Morin, a Committee member from Beauval. “It only makes sense, then, for our committee to take on a secondary goal of working towards phase-out of the nuclear industry. So we are also spreading the message that for the sake of all life on the planet, now and future generations, society must transition to renewable sources of energy, allowing industry to stop the production of this most lethal and long-lasting substance.”

Taking on one of the wealthiest industries on the planet is a lofty goal, to be sure, but Committee members say they’re undeterred.

“Never underestimate the power of ordinary people to restore sanity to the world,” says Beauval resident Debbie Mihalicz.
Dr. Profit Takes the B.C. Government – and Medicare – to Court

The battle to keep health care privatization at bay will soon be fought over B.C.'s provincial health care legislation.

The B.C. government is facing a lawsuit from a group of for-profit clinics led by Dr. Brian Day, who is widely known as "Dr. Profit" for his aggressive efforts to establish private health care in Canada. Dr. Day is the owner of Vancouver's for-profit Cambie Surgery Centre, one of the clinics at the centre of the lawsuit. The lawsuit seeks to strike down provincial health legislation that limits the for-profit delivery of medically necessary services, claiming that these rules violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This case will likely end up in the Supreme Court of Canada, and may produce the defining Charter interpretation that would apply across the country. Not only would this destroy the “need, not ability to pay” paradigm of Medicare, it would also require all taxpayers to subsidize the cost of care that only a wealthy few will be able to afford.

The BC Health Coalition, of which the Council of Canadians is a member, and Canadian Doctors for Medicare applied for and won intervener status in this case in order to defend our public health care system.

Private clinics in B.C.
Around 2001, private surgical clinics began contravening B.C.’s medicare legislation, the Medicare Protection Act (MPA). Specifically, physicians began doing “MSP work” (publicly insured medically required services) at these clinics and started billing patients directly and outside the limited circumstances where this is allowed. In some instances the clinics charged much more than the MSP payment schedule allows, or “double-billed,” charging the patient or a third party while also billing the province.

The Chaoulli Case
In 2005, the Supreme Court of Canada held that Quebec legislation prohibiting the sale of private insurance for procedures already covered by the province’s public insurance plan was invalid. A majority decision found this legislation violated the rights to life and security of person under the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (meaning the decision was only applicable in Quebec). A minority decision held also that the legislation violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Chaoulli case set the stage for a challenge to medicare based on the Canadian Charter that could have a national application.

Since the Chaoulli case, there has been a significant increase in the number and scope of private clinics in B.C. and across Canada. It has also become more obvious that private clinics are contravening B.C.’s MPA, and the negative impact from these clinics on the public system has become increasingly apparent.

Cambie clinic audit
In April 2012, the Medical Services Commission conducted an audit of the Cambie Clinic. They found close to $500,000 in illegal extra billing and $66,000 in double billing within a 30-day period.

Following this audit, the B.C. government gave the Cambie Clinic 30 days to comply with the law. The clinic did not do so.

The B.C. government moved to file an injunction to prevent the clinic from continuing these illegal practices. This injunction is now in limbo until the constitutional challenge is decided.

The threat to medicare
B.C. private clinic owners have launched a direct attack on the single most important feature of the medicare model, which is that health care must be provided according to a patient’s need, not her or his ability to pay. The clinics argue that medicare rules are unconstitutional because they prohibit privatized care for those who can afford to pay for it. So while this case is being heard in a B.C. court, it actually threatens key parts of the Canada Health Act that are incorporated into the health care statutes of all provinces.

The Cambie case goes well beyond the Chaoulli decision because it takes direct aim not only at B.C.’s ban on private insurance, but also at any restriction on the ability of physicians to provide – and patients to purchase – health care services now covered by medicare.

While arguments will be put forward in a court room, this issue will also be fought in the court of public opinion. Public health care advocates have an important role to play in spreading the word about the serious threat this case poses to our medicare system.

The trial date is set for January 15, 2014.
Canada’s national health care deal is about to disappear.

We have less than one year to negotiate the 2014 Health Accord. The accord is an agreement between the federal government and provincial and territorial governments that prescribes funding and health care service delivery agreements. It is set to expire in March 2014 and must be renegotiated. The federal government is ignoring the calls of the provinces and territories to work on a deal and, shockingly, announced $36 billion worth of health care cuts that will come into effect after the next federal election in 2015.

The premiers should be outraged at the $36 billion in cuts. They should be upset over the repeated downloading of federal responsibilities for health care that includes the health care systems for members of the RCMP and for refugees, as well as veterans’ long-term care.

But if the premiers object to the cuts, they’re not speaking out publicly.

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But if the premiers object to the cuts, they’re not speaking out publicly.

The rally and march came after hundreds of people from across the country crowded into a small church down the street from the premiers and spent the day participating in workshops and town-halls, learning more about the accord and the state of health care in Canada.

At the end of the week premiers held a press conference. P.E.I. Premier Robert Ghiz reported on the progress of the premier-led health innovation working group, and announced the slight expansion of a bulk purchasing plan for drugs that the premiers have been working on.

One journalist asked: “Premier Ghiz, there are 13 premiers around the table talking about saving millions by bulk purchasing drugs, but if we wanted to save billions by introducing a national pharmacare program, who else would need to be at the table?”
The answer is the federal government. The federal government would need to be at the table to create a national pharmacare program. Instead of answering, however, Premier Ghiz ignored the query and moved on to another question.

Provinces and territories cannot afford more cuts

So why are the premiers refusing to ask the federal government for fair federal funding of health care? Medicare used to be funded through a 50-50 cost-sharing plan between the federal government and the provinces and territories. Today, the provinces cover 80 per cent of health care costs. This amount will increase when the federal government’s funding cuts are implemented in its 2016/2017 budget.

Without federal leadership, public health care is losing its national cohesion. Increasingly we are seeing a patchwork of services and delivery times. The Canada Health Act’s assurance of comprehensive, portable, universal, accessible health care is disappearing. Conversations with premiers reveal that it’s clear they’re worried about making too much noise and suffering further financial cuts in other areas. There’s a real fear for provinces and territories that the federal government will make more devastating cuts to the Canada Social Transfer, which helps pay for social services and education, employment insurance and other programs. Smaller, less wealthy provinces simply can’t afford to have more taken away.

What can we do?

The Council of Canadians and CUPE are working together to launch a campaign to fight against the $36 billion in health care cuts and push for a health accord that creates national standards and equality of health care services across Canada.

The campaign is being piloted in Prince Edward Island and British Columbia this fall. Activities include workshops with Council activists, CUPE, HEU and other union members, provincial health coalition members and community allies; public townhalls with national and local speakers; door-to-door canvassing in vulnerable federal Conservative ridings; and a community festival to celebrate Canada’s 50-plus years of medicare.

At the workshops participants will learn about the 2014 Health Accord – what it is, what it does, and why we need a new one. They’ll receive training on how to talk to their friends, family and community about the accord. Then we will hit the sidewalks and conduct door-to-door canvassing to talk to people about what the abdication of the federal Conservative government from health care means for them and for their community.

We are encouraging members of the public to be involved in the call for federal leadership on a 2014 Health Accord. We need the Harper government to take responsibility for health care expenditures, the creation of national standards, and the expansion of public health care into new areas such as pharmacare, home and community care, dental care, and mental health care.

By working together for a 2014 Health Accord, we can make health care better for everyone.

Adrienne Silnicki is the Health Care Campaigner for the Council of Canadians. If you have ideas or suggestions for this campaign, please email Adrienne at asilnicki@canadians.org.
For the first time since we were founded in 1985, the Council of Canadians is updating our by-law and governance policies.

After almost two years of consideration and debate, our new by-law has been approved by the Board of Directors and will be put before our members for confirmation at the Council’s Annual General Meeting in Saskatoon on October 27, 2013.

The process of arriving at this by-law involved broad consultation, which occurred during last year’s AGM and at our chapters’ regional meetings this past spring. In August, Council members were invited by email to complete a survey that asked about the key issues in this governance review.

The Council of Canadians is a federal not-for-profit corporation similar to many other environmental, social justice and human rights organizations. As a result of the new Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act (NPCA), which became law in 2009, organizations were required to review and change their governance. With the enactment of regulations in 2011, every not-for-profit organization was given three years to conform to the NPCA provisions and to file an application to continue their operations.

While many of the NPCA changes were minor and benign, there was one change that posed a major challenge for the Council, and for many of our colleague organizations. Under the Act, every organization must make the name and contact information, including email address, of every one of its members available to any other member on request. In theory, the purpose of this requirement is to enable a member to influence the governance of the corporation. The NPCA supersedes the Privacy Act. With an organization as large and as open as the Council, the Board of Directors believes that this means that information about our members, including their contact information, would inevitably become public and available to those who might use it to harm the Council.

Of the 6,175 members who completed the survey, 83 per cent said that they were either “very” or “somewhat” concerned about their contact information becoming public.

Thankfully, the new by-law has a creative solution to this challenge that is founded on fundamental democratic principles.

The Council of Canadians currently has tens of thousands of members across Canada and around the world. The term “member” will now become “supporter.” We will also create a representative council structure for the purposes of the NPCA. Individuals will be selected to become members of this council through one of the following:

- Each Council of Canadians chapter across the country will appoint one member. (70)
- Each affiliated group (social and labour partners) will appoint one member. (15)
- Each First Nation we work with will appoint one member. (5)
- Each Board Director is a member. (20)
- The Board of Directors may appoint up to one-third more members to ensure gender balance, diversity, regional membership and areas of activity. (30)

This council of roughly 135 individuals will meet once each year (principally electronically) to make decisions about governance matters specified in the NPCA such as the election of the Board of Directors, approval of financial statements, appointment of the public accountant, etc.

According to the survey results, 94 per cent of members either “strongly” or “somewhat” agree to the creation of this representative council.

As in our current structure, the Board of Directors will be elected through a nominating committee approach that is accessible to everyone involved in the Council’s work. The committee will be required to put forward the names of those elected as regional chapter representatives.

Every other individual who supports the principles and purposes of the Council and who makes a financial contribution will be a “supporter.” Supporters will continue to be critical to our work on the important issues of the day and will be encouraged to play an active role in all of our campaigns. Supporters will also continue to be eligible to attend meetings and to debate policies, finances and governance of the Council. Where those topics fall within the exclusive member authority in the NPCA, the resolution will be presented in the form of a recommendation to the members.
The term “supporter” was the choice of 68 per cent of those who responded to the membership survey.

The Board of Directors is now finalizing a comprehensive governance policy that will address all of the other issues. Under the new by-law, the Board is authorized to adopt and amend such policies at any meeting. Topics in the policy will include the following:

- The right of supporters to consult on the financing, governance and policies of the Council at meetings the Board may call for this purpose, as well as the right to receive the annual reports.
- The rules governing the affiliation of groups and First Nations.
- The role and responsibility of chapters and their right to select a member.
- General rules concerning the operation of the Board that are unchanged from the current by-law.

The Council governance policies also include our Vision Statement, Ethical Purchasing Policy, Non-Violence Policy, Non-Partisanship Policy and a general statement adopted in November 2005 titled *The Purpose, Structure and Governance of The Council of Canadians*. This final policy outlines how, whenever possible, our decision making will involve members, supporters, activists, staff and directors working collaboratively to achieve a consensus. All of these policies can be found on our website at www.canadians.org/about.

Our sincere thanks to everyone who has—and who will—participate in this governance renewal process. We are a stronger organization because of your involvement.

Garry Neil is the Executive Director of the Council of Canadians.

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**Q1** The new Not-For-profit Corporations Act will grant every member of any organization access to the names and contact information, including e-mail address, of all other members. How concerned are you that your contact information as a member of the Council of Canadians could become public under this new legislation?

- **Very concerned**
- **Somewhat concerned**
- **Somewhat unconcerned**
- **Very unconcerned**

**Q2** For purposes of complying with the Not-for-profit Corporations Act and protecting your contact information, do you agree with the proposal for the Council of Canadians to replace the term “member” and create a council of representatives made up of chapters, affiliated groups, First Nations with which we work, board members and other selected to ensure diversity?

- **Strongly agree**
- **Somewhat agree**
- **Somewhat disagree**
- **Strongly disagree**

**Q3** As a valuable member of the Council of Canadians what would you prefer to be called in the new structure?

- **Partner**
- **Defeander**
- **Friend**
- **Supporter**
- **Other**

**Q4** When you consider all of the organizations to which you belong, how important do you consider your membership in the Council of Canadians?

- **Among my most important**
- **Somewhat more important**
- **Somewhat less important**
- **Among my least important**
Canada joined the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations in October 2012 and the Harper government has said almost nothing about the massive corporate rights deal since then.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a 12-nation free trade and corporate rights deal that is being led by the United States, but also includes Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. Thailand, the Philippines and South Korea have also expressed interest in joining the talks, which would eclipse the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the ways democracy would be constrained to cater to the interests of multinational corporations.

It is a broad and far-reaching deal that has been shrouded in secrecy. It’s as if the government is deliberately keeping people in the dark on this agreement. But in Canada and globally, calls to end the TPP secrecy are getting louder. Activists promoting trade justice, access to medicines and fair copyright rules won’t stop until the entire text of the agreement is made public. The pressure is producing results from Canada to Chile to Malaysia.

“The TPP is a sweeping agreement covering issues that affect many areas of Canada’s economy and society – including several areas of policy that have never been subject to trade agreements before,” said Opposition International Trade Critic Don Davies at the end of August, as negotiators from the 12 TPP countries met again behind closed doors in Brunei. “By keeping Parliament completely in the dark on negotiations the Conservatives also leave Canadians in the dark and, for an agreement of this magnitude, that is abnormal and unacceptable.”

The Council of Canadians and Common Frontiers have issued a joint statement demanding that TPP countries make public the full TPP negotiating text – just as in 2001 the Free Trade Area of the Americas agreement was published by the U.S. government in an “unprecedented effort to make international trade and its economic and social benefits more understandable to the public,” according to the United States Trade Representative at the time.

Our joint statement pointed out that compared to the FTAA’s eight chapters, the TPP contains 26, with only two of them pertaining to “trade” as most of us understand the word. The other 24 chapters involve restrictions on governments’ abilities to make health policy, the criminalization of everyday uses of the Internet, new limits on access to affordable medicines, prohibiting “buy local” policies, encouraging privatization, discouraging the creation of Crown corporations or new public utilities, and empowering corporations to sue governments in private tribunals that operate outside the court system when they’re unhappy with environmental or other measures that lower profits.

Internationally, calls for TPP transparency are also growing. Chilean senators have officially demanded “timely and accurate” information about the negotiations, and have called for a public debate on the agreement. In Malaysia, the lack of information and debate risks destroying any popular or political support for the deal whatsoever.

Following a TPP ministers’ meeting in Brunei on August 23, Malaysian Trade Minister Mustapa Mohamed wrote of the “growing discomfort domestically arising from Malaysia’s participation in the TPP negotiations, the outreach activities that had been undertaken and the concerns raised by the various stakeholders, specifically on the issue of lack of transparency and disclosure of information on the texts being negotiated.” Mohamed said he “amplified these concerns during the bilateral meetings with my counterparts from New Zealand, Japan, Mexico, Canada, Singapore and the U.S. and exchanged views on how best to take this forward.”

From one Malaysian minister, we have more information about Malaysia’s position on the TPP than the Harper government has told us of Canada’s position in the past year. Requests by federal trade committee members for Canada’s cost-benefit analysis of the TPP were ignored, possibly because it would prove how little Canada has to gain through the deal. Unfortunately, it’s more likely the government hasn’t done any assessment at all. Malaysia is only now performing its own, also because of widespread public pressure.

On August 29, as the last round of TPP negotiations was ending, the Council of Canadians, Common Frontiers, CUPE, Universities Allied for Essential Medicines, OpenMedia and local allies held rallies against TPP secrecy in Toronto, Montreal and Nanaimo. The rallies, part of a global week of action on the TPP, were inspired by similar actions in the United States against the TPP by trade justice activists and the Occupy movement. These rallies and actions will continue until the full negotiating text is made public or the TPP negotiations fall apart – whichever comes first.

Stuart Trew is the Trade Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.
Chapter Contacts

The Council of Canadians appreciates the energy and dedication of our chapter activists. If you are interested in joining a chapter please see the contacts list below, or get in touch with the regional office closest to you. For more information on the Council’s chapters, visit www.canadians.org or call us at 1-800-387-7177.

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