

# Chapter Activist Profile

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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 consulta-

tion 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 late push-back 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](http://www.canadians.org) or call us toll-free at 1-800-387-7177.