

Chapter Action Updates

by Philippe-A Charbonneau

The Council of Canadians Northwest Territories Chapter held its inaugural meeting earlier this year.



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.

The Mid-Island, Winnipeg, Brant County, Simcoe Region, Thunder Bay, London and Guelph chapters all participated.

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.