Dear friends,

I hope this report finds you well. It’s packed with inspiring stories and timely analysis on the real and substantive progress you are driving in communities across Canada and beyond.

There’s no better example of this than the recent announcement that Trans-Canada is pulling the plug on its proposed Energy East pipeline. For four long years the Council worked tirelessly to expose the serious flaws in this broken pipeline plan. We stood side-by-side with communities along the pipeline route from Hardisty, Alberta to Red Head, New Brunswick, opposing what would have been the biggest oil pipeline in North America. We raised awareness about the danger Energy East posed to thousands of waterways it would have crossed, threatening them with spills of the dirtiest energy on the planet.

As well, Prime Minister Trudeau has finally relented on his refusal to discuss a national pharmacare plan and has instructed his health minister to work with the provinces and territories to negotiate common drug prices, with an eye to a “national formulary.” Clearly his government is bending to pressure from Canadians – the vast majority of whom want a national drug plan – and is taking the first steps toward one.

On trade, there have been a number of positive signs. While most of CETA – the trade deal with Europe – is now in place, our movement succeeded in forcing the European Parliament to hold back on the investor-state provision that allows foreign investors to sue governments, making it go through every national Parliament in Europe.

As well, Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland is working with labour and other allies to try to insert workers’, women’s, Indigenous and environmental rights into a revised NAFTA. We have been clear that adding these rights without profoundly altering many other aspects of NAFTA will not make the deal palatable.

The Council of Canadians has been at the forefront of these and other important campaigns. We are working hard to get the Trudeau government to fulfill its promise to re-instate the water laws gutted by the Harper government. The Kinder Morgan pipeline – another tar sands pipeline – is just as important as Energy East and we are fully engaged in that struggle. We continue to push the government on its promises of electoral reform. And we know that a whole host of bad trade agreements – from the revived Trans-Pacific Partnership and the dangerous Trade in Services Agreement, to a deal with China – are all coming at us. With your help, we will not give up any of these fights.

Personally, I am very busy for someone trying to slow down! I had the honour of being the keynote speaker at a number of labour conventions over the summer, including for the Public Service Alliance of Canada and Unifor. I continue to speak at events across the country and outside. One particular moving gathering took place in Flint, Michigan, where people have been poisoned by lead in their drinking water. I also presented to a rights of nature tribunal at the Bonn climate summit to a huge and appreciative audience.

My big fall project was writing a new report, Getting it Right: A peoples’ guide to renegotiating NAFTA. Please read and share it! (You can read an excerpt of it on page 4. The full report is available online at canadians.org/NAFTA, or call us at 1-800-387-7177 and we will mail you a copy!).

As always, I thank you all and value you so much. You are the reason there is hope for a better Canada and fairer world.

Maude Barlow, Honorary Chairperson, The Council of Canadians
Camille Prince Shaw, a Grade 5 teacher at Whitby Public School in Durham County, Ontario, wanted to teach her class a lesson about the importance of acting for social justice.

When looking for a suitable project, Ms. Prince Shaw spoke with a school board representative, who suggested that she have a look at the Council of Canadians’ website. After reading about the Council of Canadians’ campaign work for water, including the push for safe, clean water for First Nations, Ms. Prince Shaw saw the potential for a teachable moment. She helped her students research and learn about the water crisis in many First Nation communities, where many people do not have access to safe, drinkable water. In late 2016, there were 156 drinking water advisories in 110 First Nations communities. Many of the drinking water advisories are recurring, and some have been in place for more than 20 years.

The students collaboratively decided to raise money to improve drinking water infrastructure in First Nations communities as their act of social justice.

Ms. Prince Shaw said she wanted the students to recognize that not everyone receives the same access to basic and essential resources like water. She also wanted to teach students that social justice problem solving is everyone’s responsibility, including children’s.

The students came up with a plan, spread the word, made posters for the community and hosted a creative information session about the project. They made Wampum bracelets as gestures of thanks to those who donated to their fundraising efforts.

Gurleen, one of Ms. Prince Shaw’s students, said she did not realize how many people don’t have reliable clean, safe water.

“I found out that First Nations weren’t treated right, they were taken from their own lands and put onto reserves. These reserves didn’t provide all their needs such as clean water,” she said. “I learned that there are many people who don’t have clean water, and it is hard to believe some people in Canada don’t have clean water.”

Jessica, another student in the class, said she liked learning about the significance of the bracelets.

“The Wampum bracelets taught me that the First Nations would make peace between tribes by creating bracelets that would show they were a friendly and harmonious tribe. Our class made Wampum bracelets for those willing to help by donating. We did that so the First Nations could afford to have clean water at their reserves. We raised almost $400 in a few hours. It made me feel good to help other people.”

Ms. Prince Shaw said she was really proud of her students’ efforts. “As a teacher it is my role to teach math and language along with the other subjects. However, it’s also imperative that teachers develop character and critical thinking skills in students as well. Young people should learn how to affect positive change. I believe that knowledge is power and that empowering students to make change creates caring and responsible individuals, which in turn makes good citizens.”

Ms. Prince Shaw said the Wampum Project mirrored the efforts of the Council of Canadians on a smaller scale. “This project was a culminating hands-on experience that enabled students to become agents for social and environmental justice. Like the Council of Canadians, we believe that our government needs to be held accountable and deliver on its promises. Peace will come when all rights are received and fairness is finally achieved.”

Jan Malek is the Publications Officer at the Council of Canadians.
My day started like any other, cooking breakfast with my kids. My phone pinged and there it was – a breaking news story that TransCanada had pulled the plug on the $15.7 billion Energy East pipeline!

I’ll always remember that moment, which was followed by a celebratory dance with my kids in the kitchen before I rushed into the office.

Energy East’s demise has been written on the wall for a while.

The failings of the National Energy Board (NEB), the newly required climate test, clear threats to drinking water and Indigenous rights and strong community opposition all played a role in making TransCanada back down – but you would never know that from the media coverage.

Media coverage also saw pundits rehashing old clichés that blame Quebec for stopping Energy East. Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall went so far as to question the federal system of equalization payments.

TransCanada didn’t win over Quebec
TransCanada proposed an export port in protected beluga-inhabited waters. The pipeline crossed key water sources that supply the drinking water of more than 3 million residents. Diluted bitumen, which is known to sink in water, would have had devastating consequences if spilled.

In a pivotal misstep, TransCanada hired Jean Charest, a former Quebec premier, as a project lobbyist. The National Observer exposed information about a private meeting between the NEB and TransCanada, which was later found to be a conflict of interest, effectively grinding the pipeline’s federal review to a halt.

How we helped stop Energy East
With your generous support, Energy East faced a wall of opposition that grew stronger every day.

In 2013, when the project was first announced, we immediately got to work. The Council of Canadians organized 16 public forums, meeting face-to-face with landowners, Indigenous communities, local groups and politicians along the pipeline path. This helped to connect people to each other and build local opposition.

We released eight hard-hitting reports that exposed Energy East’s risks to our climate and water and TransCanada’s terrible spill track record.

We helped drive more than 100,000 people to send messages to the NEB urging the board to include climate change impacts in its review of the pipeline. The day after the NEB announced it would include a climate test, TransCanada signaled it was reconsidering the project.

Other tar sands pipelines
You may have heard about Kinder Morgan’s proposed Trans Mountain pipeline in B.C. Like Energy East, the Kinder Morgan project is also proving to be a long and expensive fight against a billion-dollar U.S. oil giant. There is also Enbridge’s Line 3 in Manitoba and Line 10 in Ontario – both of these tar sands pipelines face opposition.

All of these fights are about protecting water from harmful projects. They are about always respecting the rights of Indigenous peoples. And they are about changing our continued commitment to climate-damaging fossil fuel projects and moving to a sustainable energy future for us all.

Stopping Energy East proves once again that together, we can do this.

Andrea Harden-Donahue is the Energy and Climate Justice Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.
The governments of North America are deep into a process of renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that was signed over 20 years ago. NAFTA has been instrumental, along with a generation of bad policies, in worsening wealth inequality, job insecurity, wage stagnation and the creation of a precarious work force. It has weakened public services and led to lower regulatory standards in areas such as food, pesticides, and health and safety rules. NAFTA has allowed American corporations to challenge higher Canadian environmental regulations.

The Council of Canadians vigorously opposed NAFTA and its predecessor, the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, when they were being negotiated, and we have exposed the flaws in these agreements and their fall-out closely since. Our opinion of NAFTA has not changed; quite the opposite.

However, in solidarity with the labour movement and other civil society organizations that are hoping to use these renegotiations to insert meaningful chapters and protections for workers, the environment, women and First Nations, we are watching the renegotiation process with a critical eye. We are doubtful that the three parties – Canada, the United States and Mexico – will come to an agreement that rights what is so wrong with NAFTA from when it was written more than 20 years ago. And we are very clear that tinkering with the current NAFTA will not suffice. As the Canadian Union of Public Employees says, “A bad agreement with a good labour chapter is still a bad agreement.”

The Council of Canadians will only support a new trade agreement for North America if it will:
- Remove Chapter 11’s corporate-friendly investor-state dispute settlement provisions.
- Put workers and their rights at the heart of a new agreement.
- Promote and protect public services.
- Include strong provisions to protect the environment and natural resources.
- Maintain the right to regulate in the public interest.
- Remove the energy chapter and cancel the proportional energy sharing provision.
- Remove all references to water.
- Maintain and expand the exemption for culture.
- Protect Canada’s supply management system.
- Protect and enhance Indigenous rights.

There is a great deal at stake in these talks and Canada should be prepared to walk away if a new agreement does not protect the rights of Canadians and the environment. A study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that if NAFTA is terminated and Canadian exporters were forced to revert to the World Trade Organization rules and tariff rates, the impact would be “disruptive, but by no means catastrophic.” The report finds that for 96 per cent of total Canadian exports – the effective cost of losing the “NAFTA advantage” – would amount to only 1.5 per cent of the value of Canadian exports.

A September 2017 EKOS Research poll commissioned by the Council of Canadians found that most Canadians say the government should walk away from NAFTA if it’s a “bad deal.” Eighty per cent agreed that water should not be treated as a commodity under NAFTA as it is now; 70 per cent said measures requiring Canada to maintain energy export quotas to the U.S. should be removed; and 63 per cent agreed that Chapter 11 should be removed from the deal.

There has never been a better time to reign in the power of transnational capital and transnational corporations. There has never been a better time to recognize the sacred democratic authority of people, communities and their elected governments to protect human and workers’ rights and the environment upon which we all depend for life.

Let’s get it right.

This is an excerpt of Maude Barlow’s new report, Getting it Right: A people’s guide to renegotiating NAFTA. Read the full report online at canadians.org/nafta-guide.
In late September, the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) released a report that showed the federal government could save $4 billion by implementing a long-awaited national pharmacare program.

While many public health care advocates feel the PBO has estimated the cost for pharmacare too high at $19 billion and the savings too low, a pharmacare program would still result in substantial financial benefits and would improve the health of Canadians.

The PBO was mandated to use the Quebec drug formulary to price out the cost of offering every resident of Canada access to medicines. Quebec uses a mixed model of public and private insurance to cover the cost of drugs for its residents, which has kept the price of medicine in Quebec fairly high. Quebec does not take advantage of the economies of scale of having the government purchase medicine on behalf of its whole population. There would be even greater savings with national economies of scale. The good news is that the cost of any plan using the Quebec model will be a worst-case scenario and Canadians can expect much lower prices from a national public drug plan.

In 2015, Canada spent $28.5-billion on prescription drugs, including $13.1-billion (46 per cent) paid by public drug plans, $10.7-billion by private drug plans (37 per cent) and $4.7-billion (17 per cent) paid out of pocket by individuals.

According to the PBO’s report, approximately 700,000 Canadians do not have coverage for prescription medications while 3.6 million have inadequate coverage. This means there are many people who can’t afford their medications.

The Council of Canadians has joined with groups and organizations across the country to call for a national pharmacare program. Canada is the only country in the world with a public health care system that does not include public coverage for drugs.

Maude Barlow, Honorary Chairperson of the Council of Canadians spoke with labour representatives at a recent Unifor convention about the personal impacts the high cost of medications can have on people.

“Several years ago the Canadian Health Coalition held cross country hearings and asked Canadians to share their experiences. Some spoke of losing their jobs due to serious illness, but being too young for pension benefits that would have included the high cost of their drugs,” she said. “Some people with disabilities had to choose between staying on income assistance or going to work and losing coverage. One woman said she was thinking about divorcing her husband so she could go on welfare and have her drugs covered.”

As drug costs continue to rise and more people struggle to pay for their medications, pharmacare will become an even more pressing issue. The Council of Canadians is committed to seeing Tommy Douglas’ full dream of medicare – a truly universal and public health care system that also covers the cost of medications – become a reality.

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Parliamentary Budget Officer Sets High Cost for Pharmacare

Have you or a family member ever had difficulty paying for your medications?

Tell us your story! Cut out this section and send it back to us using the enclosed envelope – no postage needed. Can you also chip in to help us make pharmacare a reality? Use the form below to donate. Thank you!

☐ YES – I agree, we need a national pharmacare plan now.

Here’s my contribution to help:

☐ $45 ☐ $65 ☐ $125 ☐ $265 ☐ My choice $ _____________

☐ Enclosed is my cheque made out to The Council of Canadians

☐ Please charge my credit card:

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex

Card # ___________________________ Expiry: ___/ ___

Name on card: ________________________

Signature: ____________________________

Donate by phone at 1-800-387-7177, or online at canadians.org.

Due to the Council’s political advocacy work donations are not tax deductible.

Tell us your story (more space on the back of this page):
In September, approximately 200 people gathered at the Woodside Church in Flint, Michigan for the Water is Life: Strengthening our Great Lakes Commons summit.

Council of Canadians Honorary Chairperson Maude Barlow kicked off Friday evening with an important keynote speech about water justice struggles around the world and the work that is being done to have the UN recognize the human rights to water and sanitation.

Over the two day summit, participants learned about water injustices around the Great Lakes where governments are allowing Nestlé and other water companies to take, control and sell water from local sources for a profit, while failing to secure the human right to water for residents in Flint, Detroit, and many Indigenous nations.

Wearing a “Flint Lives Matter” t-shirt, Saturday’s keynote speaker, Claire McClinton of Democracy Defense League, pointed out, “In Flint, Michigan, you can buy a gallon of lead-free gas, or a gallon of lead-free paint, but you can’t get a gallon of lead-free water from your own tap.”

Lila Cabbil from the Detroit People’s Water Board talked about how race influences the water concerns in Michigan. “The fight we have in Michigan is very much racialized. We need to understand that truth and we need to speak that truth, because what is happening even as we speak in terms of how Flint and Detroit are being treated would not happen if it was a white community.”

In Canada, the lack of clean water is also often racialized. There are routinely more than 100 drinking water advisories in First Nations, some of which have been in place for nearly two decades. Sylvia Plain from Aamjiwnaang First Nation spoke to the audience about how Aamjiwnaang First Nation has had methylmercury in the sediments in their river for a couple of decades. She also talked about the Anishinaabe, who have cared for the waters and land for thousands of years.

Rob Case from Wellington Water Watchers and Peggy Case from Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation described Nestlé’s water takings in their communities and how concerned residents are objecting to Nestlé’s bottling operations.

In Ontario, Nestlé continues to pump up to 4.7 million litres of water every day despite the fact that both of the company’s permits have expired – one expired at the end of this summer and the other expired more than one year ago. Local groups and residents are calling for a phase-out of bottled water takings to protect drinking water. The Council of Canadians wants to make Nestlé and other bottled water takings an election issue in next year’s Ontario election.

Nestlé’s bottled water operations in B.C. have also outraged residents. Despite the province’s 2015 drought, Nestlé continues to extract 265 million litres from a well in Hope, located on Sto:lo Territory. The well connects to an aquifer that 6,000 nearby residents rely on. But Nestlé is not the only company taking water and selling it for profit. Agriculture Canada reports that 83 per cent of Canada’s bottled water exports come from B.C.

During the Water is Life summit, participants joined the more than 50,000 people who have taken the Council’s pledge to boycott Nestlé and to stop using single-use bottles of water. This would help stop the plastic bottles from ending up in landfills and the ongoing commodification of water.

At the end of the summit, one thing was clear: participants were energized and ready to take action to end to Nestlé’s bottled water takings, have the human right to water implemented, and secure water justice for everyone who lives around the Great Lakes and beyond.

Emma Lui is the Water Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.
Council of Canadians chapters are active in more than 50 communities across Canada, protecting water and public health care and fighting for climate justice, fair trade and strengthened democracy. Chapter members are volunteers who believe that by working together, we all have a role to play in building a better Canada and fairer world.

Celebrating the end of Energy East
Council of Canadians chapters from Alberta to Nova Scotia celebrated Trans-Canada’s decision to dump the Energy East pipeline, which would have moved more than 1 million barrels of tar sands crude per day to the East Coast to be shipped overseas. Since the project was first announced four years ago, Council chapters have helped organize town halls, marches, and actions to raise awareness of the dangers the pipeline would pose to waterways and our climate. Chapter activists joined with First Nations and environmental groups to build a grassroots-based wall of opposition that raised serious concerns about this pipeline project, and ultimately helped to defeat it.

Campbell River chapter fights hospital fees
The Council of Canadians Campbell River chapter is celebrating the recent decision by the Vancouver Island Health Authority (Island Health) to scrap their plan to charge for parking at the newly opened Campbell River and Comox Valley hospitals. Chapter activist Rich Hagensen said the chapter worked locally on the issue for more than two years, writing letters, attending town halls and speaking out at meetings.

Talking to MPs about Canada’s “Boiling Point”
Through the summer and fall, Council of Canadians chapter representatives from across the country have been meeting with Members of Parliament to talk about Canada’s growing water crisis. Over-extractions, pollution and large pipeline and industrial projects are threatening waterways and drinking water sources. The Trudeau government has also not fulfilled its promise to reinstate water protections after the former Harper government gutted legislation, leaving 99 per cent of all lakes and rivers in Canada vulnerable to abuse. Chapter members gave each MP they visited a copy of Maude Barlow’s latest book, Boiling Point: Government Neglect, Corporate Abuse, and Canada’s Water Crisis.

Speaking out against Line 10
The Hamilton, South Niagara and Guelph chapters of the Council of Canadians took part in protests against Enbridge’s Line 10 pipeline. The company wants to expand the 143-kilometre pipeline to send 63,000 barrels per day of heavy tar sands crude from Hamilton, Ontario to Buffalo, New York. The company is reportedly doing the pipeline expansion in segments since projects less than 40 kilometres in length are exempted from a federal environmental assessment. The overall route would cross more than 60 waterways and impact 13 wetlands. Tar sands crude has been proven very difficult to clean up – a spill would devastate any water or land it touches.

Atlantic chapters call out Alton Gas project
Nova Scotia-based chapters have been hosting town halls and raising awareness about the impacts a proposed natural gas storage project will have on water, Indigenous rights and the climate. Alton Natural Gas Storage LP, a subsidiary of Calgary-based AltaGas Ltd., wants to build underground caverns to store natural gas near the Shubenacadie River on Sipekne’katik territory near the rural communities of Alton and Stewiacke, which are situated about 75 kilometres north of Halifax. The Council of Canadians has joined a coalition of groups that are trying to stop the project.

If you are interested in joining a Council of Canadians chapter near you, or learning more about the good work our chapters are doing in communities across the country, please call us toll-free at 1-800-387-7177 or visit our website at: www.canadians.org/chapters.
Save the Date!
Start planning now to join us in Ottawa for Groundswell 2018!

The Council of Canadians’ conference and annual general meeting will feature a weekend of inspiring speakers and dynamic workshops on some of the most pressing issues of our time – and how we come together as individuals, communities and movements to tackle them.

**June 22-24, 2018**
Carleton University
Ottawa, ON

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