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ALSO INSIDE: CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF ACTING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE | YOUTH CAN BE ELECTION GAME CHANGERS | CANADA’S LAKES AND RIVERS LOSE LEGISLATIVE PROTECTION | NOT A DONE DEAL: EUROPEAN COUNTRIES OPPOSE CETA
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The degree of social licence obtained is often based on three elements: the project may be acceptable, unacceptable, or acceptable with certain conditions.

For social licence to fully take place, the communities must have clear and adequate knowledge, based on independent scientific research, of the potential risks, the advantages and the impacts of a project. In other words, be able to make an informed decision based on all of the possible implications of the project that will affect their community. They must have an opportunity to engage in a meaningful discussion as to the values of the project and its development to the society at large. And they must have the ability to say “no” to a project.

In a sense, social licence is more than a moral obligation, it is a social contract to be obtained and respected. Without it, consider the project as a hostile take-over.

Raymond Cusson
Shoal Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador

We must increase voter turnout

Letters in the Autumn 2014 edition of Canadian Perspectives reflect a hopeful and persisting interest in voter turnout.

Fair Vote Canada is actively pursuing the implementation of various proportional representation models. Elections Canada focused its annual “Canada’s Democracy Week” on increasing voter participation among Canada’s youth. Sociologists and political strategists have studied declining voter turnout for quite some time and the results have not affected voter participation. Awareness programs for the varied voter demographics in our country have borne similar results.

While social experimentation can create change, applying any of the proportional representation models creates problems. The progressive selection of subsequent models, educating voters, administering each new electoral model, and evaluating its results could create hope that a new model might increase turnout. But the gradual changes, if they do occur, will accrue over generations and only if the political authorities carry a long-term commitment to the issue.

Regrettably, time is working against us. Canada’s democracy, its civil liberties and social programs are declining. There is a need now to seriously consider the viability of mandatory voting which, incidentally, does not eliminate or hinder the added strategies of implementing popular representation or addressing the factors that affect voter turnout.

The need to increase voter turnout is urgent. Mandatory voting is not an end in itself. It should be an essential part of effective legislative reform.

It is time for a full debate on mandatory voting.

André Clément, Sudbury, Ontario

What Canadians want?

Re: “Why Canadians won’t bother voting,” Autumn 2014 issue of Canadian Perspectives

The letter writer states that the current federal government was elected with 38 per cent of the vote.

In fact, the government was elected with votes from approximately 25 per cent of the eligible voters.

With a 60 per cent turnout of voters, and 38 per cent voting Conservative, the current government has the support of slightly less than 25 per cent of eligible voters.

On this basis, the government has trashed science, regulation powers, water resources, and more supposedly because it “knows what Canadians want.”

Robert Hamm, Steinbach, MB

Social licence

A concept that has become a significant part of the popular discourse in most new energy projects is the notion of “social licence.” Whether it is fracking in Newfoundland and Labrador, mining or pipelines in Quebec or the Maritimes, or LNG terminals and pipelines in northern British Columbia, industry and governments are being asked to obtain some level of permission from communities. Perceived as a form of approval and resistance for the communities or, at the very least, a direct involvement in the decision-making process, it is often viewed as a problem and another obstacle to go through by the project proponents. In addition to obtaining the necessary government permits, companies have to negotiate “social permission.”

The degree of social licence obtained is often based on three elements: the project may be acceptable, unacceptable, or acceptable with certain conditions.

For social licence to fully take place, the communities must have clear and adequate knowledge, based on independent scientific research, of the potential risks, the advantages and the impacts of a project. In other words, be able to make an informed decision based on all of the possible implications of the project that will affect their community. They must have an opportunity to engage in a meaningful discussion as to the values of the project and its development to the society at large. And they must have the ability to say “no” to a project.

In a sense, social licence is more than a moral obligation, it is a social contract to be obtained and respected. Without it, consider the project as a hostile take-over.

Raymond Cusson
Shoal Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador
Dear friends,

It’s been another jam-packed fall and winter. The highlights on my schedule have been the tours across Canada, meeting with wonderful activists and caring Canadians and, of course, celebrating our organization’s 30th anniversary with all of you.

December in Newfoundland marked the end of a deeply moving 15-city tour with CUPE President Paul Moist to promote public health care. At every stop, Canadians told us heart-wrenching stories of what medicare means to them and how cuts to health care are affecting patients and front-line workers alike. During the tour, CUPE and Council of Canadians supporters knocked on over 42,000 doors and we sent out almost 200,000 leaflets promoting a renewed health accord.

The second and third legs of our Energy East pipeline “Our Risk – Their Reward” tours were another incredible highlight for me. For two weeks in the fall, we visited communities in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, holding feisty town halls; meeting with elected officials, union representatives and First Nations leaders; and speaking with countless journalists. The process was repeated in April on the Prairies tour and we were met with enthusiasm and hope. We are creating a wall of grassroots resistance to this pipeline all along its route and I feel very sure it will never be built.

I have also visited many school campuses here and in the United States to talk about the global water crisis and the fight for water justice. I am always touched and moved by the enthusiasm, commitment and optimism that young people bring to these complex issues. They give me hope for the future.

In April I was in Berlin where I debated Chancellor Angela Merkel on austerity and spoke at a large public forum in advance of the June G7 meeting there. I am also to keynote a large conference in Burlington, Vermont in June, of the International Association for Great Lakes Research. I can hardly wait to share my research on how the Great Lakes are being used as a conduit for the dirtiest energy on Earth, and how we must declare the Great Lakes to be a commons and a public trust to be protected forever.

All our attention is now turning to the upcoming fall federal election. I have written two reports on the Harper agenda. Blue Betrayal: The Harper government’s assault on Canada’s freshwater tells a deeply disturbing story about the systematic way in which this government has gone about not only dismantling regulatory protection of our water, but also cementing that deregulation through corporate-friendly trade and investment deals.

The second report, Broken Covenant: How Stephen Harper set out to silence dissent and curtail democratic participation in Canada, gives a detailed account of the systematic way in which this government has broken not only the ties with civil society by defunding NGOs and auditing the charitable status of “enemies,” but also by cutting the departmental staff and agencies that kept these ties alive. It is a very disturbing story and one we must get out to Canadians.

As I write this, we are preparing for a large cross-Canada tour with many allies to expose the Harper agenda and promote an alternative positive vision for our country.

We can change this country and we are reminding people that one of the best ways to effect change is to Go Vote!

We also launched a constitutional challenge along with the Canadian Federation of Students against the so-called “Fair Elections Act,” as it not only makes it harder for students, First Nations and those who move for employment to vote, but also will make it harder for the public to find out about the kind of electoral fraud that took place in the last federal election.

We are involved in many coalitions and networks dedicated to exposing the harm that has been done to human rights, environmental protection, working people, the poor, First Nations, veterans, scientists, women and many others by this government. While the Council of Canadians is – and remains – non-partisan, we retain the right to criticize governments of any political stripe that bring harm to our institutions and values in the way this government has done.

We look forward to working with all of you to bring about a new day for our country. Thank you for all you have done over the past 30 years to make the Council of Canadians a strong, vibrant voice for people committed to building a better Canada.

With hope and resolve,

Maude Barlow is the National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians.
Celebrating 30 Years of Acting for Social Justice

In 1985, with a Mulroney government that had declared Canada “open for business” and the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement looming, the Council of Canadians formed to give Canadians a voice. As corporations grew in power, and governments – federal and provincial – focused more on the interests of big business and resource extractions, the Council of Canadians found creative ways to highlight social, economic and environmental injustices. Over the past 30 years we have been a part of many creative and inspiring actions and, most importantly, we have been supported by people who truly believe a better Canada – and a better world – is possible.

Here are some highlights:

1985 On March 11, the Council of Canadians is founded by publisher, author and political activist Mel Hurtig with the goals of “a new and better Canada with more and better jobs for Canadians, a higher standard of living for Canadians, and a sovereign Canada that plays an important role among the world community of nations.” In August, the Council makes a bold statement by renting a plane and dropping a Canadian flag on the bow of an American icebreaker after it entered Canadian waters without permission.

1987 The Council organizes a “Canada Summit” to coincide with U.S. President Ronald Reagan’s visit to Ottawa. The Pro-Canada Network (later the Action Canada Network) is created and its members march down to Parliament Hill and post the Canada Summit Declaration on the front door of Centre Block.

1988 Newly elected Council of Canadians Chairperson Maude Barlow, along with Canadian Auto Workers President Bob White, debate free trade with Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed and corporate lobbyist Tom d’Aquino on national television. While Lougheed and d’Aquino speak in generalities, White and Barlow focus on the technicalities and the destructive nature of the agreement.

1991 The Council, along with Friends of Canadian Broadcasting and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, forms a coalition called “100 Days of Action” to try to stop drastic cuts to the CBC. More than 1,000 employees and 11 regional production centres were to be cut in the 1991 federal budget. The public outcry forces the government to back off on some of the planned cuts.

1994 Maude Barlow writes a letter to the Council’s membership asking for their advice: “We have lost twice now (the passage of the FTA and NAFTA), and perhaps it is time to accept defeat and move on.” The response is overwhelming – members declare that the Council is needed now more than ever. With the federal government poised to grant Monsanto the right to market bovine growth hormone (BGH) in Canada, the Council builds a strong national coalition, organizes a campaign, and in 1998 wins a moratorium against the introduction of BGH in Canada.

1996 The Council holds a demonstration outside the finance ministers’ meeting in Ottawa to protest planned cuts to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). Council members present Finance Minister Paul Martin and his provincial counterparts with 100,000 petitions against the cuts. The government of British Columbia agrees and blocks Martin’s plans to cut the CPP.

1998 A new global investment treaty of unprecedented power sets off a firestorm of protest, much of it led by the Council. When negotiations for the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) break down, the Council launches a coast-to-coast inquiry into what values and policies Canadians want their government to put forward in international negotiations.

www.canadians.org
With four of Canada’s biggest banks set to merge, and with the loss of thousands of jobs and the closure of hundreds of local branches at stake, the Council launches a well-publicized cross-country campaign to convince Finance Minister Paul Martin to reject the merger plans. By December, Martin rules against the mergers. The International Monetary Fund has said recently that stopping these bank mergers helped Canada decades later during the most recent economic downturn.

1999 With international partners, the Council launches a national education and action campaign to confront the “Millennium Round” negotiations of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The outbreak of democracy on the streets during the “Battle in Seattle” leads to the complete collapse of the WTO talks.

2000 The Council challenges attempts by the world’s biggest water corporations to privatize the planet’s fresh water. In the process, a new international network of activists is formed composed of people committed to promoting universal recognition of water as a fundamental human right and to halting efforts by corporations to control and commodify it.

2001 The Council works as part of a broad-based movement to counter the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations in Quebec City. The result is one of the biggest demonstrations ever held in Canada. Committed activists with thoughtful alternatives to free trade are met by tear gas, water-cannon spray and rubber bullets.

2002 The Council gives the Romanow Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada the clear message that health care must be properly funded, that it should be expanded to include pharmacare and homecare, and that it must be protected from international trade agreements. The Council holds public events in 15 cities across Canada where Romanow Commission hearings are being held.

2004 Bowing to pressure from consumers and organizations like the Council of Canadians, Monsanto abandons its application to produce and sell genetically engineered wheat in Canada.

2005 The Council launches its Citizens’ Inquiry on Canada-U.S. Relations to counter an all-out push by the business elite of Canada to promote deep integration with the United States. Deep integration includes a common market and border, a guaranteed and uninterrupted supply of energy to the U.S., and participation in George W. Bush’s defence and “security” initiatives.

2007 Thousands of people converge in Montebello, Quebec, to protest the SPP as Prime Minister Stephen Harper meets behind closed doors with U.S. President George Bush and Mexican President Felipe Calderón. A teach-in organized by the Council draws more than 1,500 people from across Canada and around the world.

2008 Along with First Nations communities, the Council raises awareness about the devastating impacts of the Alberta and Saskatchewan-based tar sands. Witnessing the destruction of massive areas of ravaged earth and vast amounts of water turned into toxic tailing ponds first-hand, Maude Barlow calls the tar sands “Canada’s Mordor,” referring to Tolkien’s vision of a barren wasteland in Lord of the Rings.

2009 The Council celebrates two major victories. The secretive SPP deal is defeated and plans for Site 41, a landfill proposed in Simcoe County, Ontario, on top of an aquifer containing “some of the purest water in the world,” are abandoned following a long fight for the protection of this water source by community residents, First Nations, Council supporters and chapter activists.

2010 After years of work to build an international water movement, on July 28, 2010, the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly agrees to a resolution declaring the human right to “safe and clean drinking water and sanitation.” The resolution, presented by the Bolivian government, has 122 countries vote in its favour, while 41 countries – including Canada – abstain.

2011 The Council fights to protect healthy lakes and rivers from “Schedule 2,” a legal loophole that allows mining companies dump toxic waste into a body of water and permanently destroy it.

2012 The Council supports a Federal Court legal challenge by eight Canadians to overturn 2011 federal election results in six ridings following the “robocall” scandal, which saw misleading phone calls directing some voters to the wrong polling station address.

2013 Through “Common Causes” the Council joins with other groups to support First Nations’ Idle No More movement in protest against federal government omnibus budget bills that gut key parts of Canada’s environmental legislation.

In May, a Federal Court judge rules that election fraud occurred in the 2011 federal election and the most likely source of the fraud was the Conservative party’s database.

2014 The Council of Canadians galvanizes communities that would be impacted by the Energy East pipeline project, which would convert a natural gas pipeline – parts of which are up to 40 years old – to carry crude oil from Saskatchewan to Ontario, connecting it with new pipeline through Quebec and on to Saint John, New Brunswick. If approved, it would be the largest oil pipeline in North America, transporting 1.1 million barrels of oil every day. The Council continues to challenge massive pipeline projects that would lead to the expansion of the tar sands and more fracking.

2015 This year, the Council of Canadians celebrates 30 years of bringing Canadians together to act for social justice. With the generous help of our supporters, we maintain a strong commitment to protecting our fresh water, strengthening public health care, fighting for fair trade deals, and working for climate justice. Our campaigns come to life thanks to the generous donations and actions of our supporters and the volunteer efforts of our chapter activists.
Go Vote for the Change You Want to See

Our democracy is in crisis. Our rights to free speech, to protest, to vote in free and fair elections, and the right to not be subjected to widespread, invasive and unjustifiable state surveillance are all being threatened. The erosion of these democratic rights has brought us to a tipping point in the relationship between the people and our government.

It’s time for change and this is our opportunity to choose a path to a different future.

The fixed date of the next federal election is about five months away. However, Stephen Harper could break his own election law and call the vote much sooner if he thinks the Conservative party can win.

The outcome of the election will likely depend on the answer to two questions: how effective can we be at countering voter suppression and how can we significantly increase voter turnout?

Why so many people aren’t voting
In the last election 6,200 votes in 14 ridings meant the difference between majority and minority government. Meanwhile, more than 9.4 million eligible Canadian voters didn’t cast ballots, including two out of three young people.

It’s not about apathy, it’s about issues. Many potential voters are tuning out of electoral politics because they don’t see the issues that matter to them reflected in the political discussions. Many others want to vote, but face systemic barriers that deter, or even prevent them from doing so.

Voter turnout has been in decline since 1988, but the current federal government has made a particular contribution to decreasing voter turnout by taking voter suppression to a whole new level.
In 2011, we now know there was an orchestrated campaign across hundreds of ridings to mislead people about the location of their polling stations in order to prevent them from voting. A Federal Court justice found that the source of the information used for these calls was the Conservative party database. Rather than assist authorities in finding the ringleaders of this election fraud, the Conservative party has refused to disclose who had access to the database. The perpetrators remain at large.

The 2011 election fraud was then used as a pretext to introduce the so-called “Fair” Elections Act. But instead of reducing voter suppression and election fraud, the act will make it easier for both to occur. On top of this, the government has introduced Bill C-50, which will extend voter suppression provisions of the “Fair” Elections Act to Canadians living abroad.

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The Council of Canadians worked with other groups across the country to defeat some of the worst parts of the “Fair” Elections Act. However, several sections remain in the legislation that could disenfranchise tens of thousands of voters. We’re challenging those provisions in court with the Canadian Federation of Students and three individual voters.

What’s at stake in this election? The Conservatives’ record speaks for itself: gutting public services like health care and home mail delivery; attacking workers’ rights; decimating environmental protections while expanding support for the tar sands and fracking; silencing opposition voices, including whistleblowers and charities; undermining the right to water and the rights of Indigenous peoples; sabotaging international agreements; promoting corporate rights pacts like CETA; expanding war and militarism; and much, much more.

The Council of Canadians is non-partisan and therefore won’t be supporting any specific candidates or parties, but we do want a government that won’t undermine our most fundamental rights. This election is our collective opportunity to change the political landscape for the better.

Changing the rules of the game It’s time for change. We need a government that champions policies that reflect our communities’ priorities.

That change starts with this election, but at a deeper level we need to change the system that disenfranchises millions who don’t get a vote in the decisions that impact their daily lives. We need to deepen democratic participation – voting once every few years is just the beginning of a more participatory politics.

We need to change the relationship between the general public and the people we choose to represent us in Parliament. There are two important ways we can do this.

In the last election, 6,200 votes in 14 ridings meant the difference between majority and minority government.

First, we need to ensure the majority of those elected commit to much-needed democratic voting reform to replace our outdated first-past-the-post voting system. Fair Vote Canada’s Declaration of Voters’ Rights is an important organizing tool for building the necessary momentum to make this a reality.

Second, it’s time for a “people’s platform.” Political parties’ platforms, which outline what each party commits to do if elected, are key features of every election. A peoples’ platform would give people a voice and make it clear what we want from those seeking office.

Building grassroots power By the time you read this, the Council of Canadians will be in the midst of a series of democracy town halls from coast to coast. These important events will help educate and inform, and give people the tools they need in the lead-up to the next election. Following the town halls, we will organize local vote canvass teams, building on the important groundwork that has already begun with our “Game Changers Tour” that has been reaching out to young voters. We hope you will consider taking the Voter Pledge and joining your friends and neighbours to canvass your communities.

If you and everyone reading this issue of Canadian Perspectives get just two people who weren’t planning on voting to take the pledge to vote in the next federal election, it could increase the number of ballots cast by tens of thousands.

Deepening our capacity for community organizing can lead to important victories on key campaigns locally, regionally and federally. And so, regardless of which party wins the next election, we will have a stronger grassroots movement that has clearer common goals and more capacity to challenge and change the status quo.

Dylan Penner is the Democracy Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.

Taking Action for Fair Elections The Council of Canadians, the Canadian Federation of Students, and three individual electors have filed more than 2,000 pages of powerful evidence for our charter challenge of the so-called “Fair” Elections Act. At the time of publication, we asked for a court order to quash parts of the act that will suppress the votes of tens of thousands of qualified electors.

For the latest on this ground-breaking legal challenge visit our website at www.canadians.org/charter-challenge.

For all the latest updates on the Council of Canadians’ Democracy campaign, visit www.canadians.org/democracy.
Youth Can be Election Game Changers

The Council of Canadians stands up for democracy as a fundamental pillar of our society. As the next federal election approaches, we will be in communities across Canada to give people the tools and information they need to make an informed choice at the ballot box.

In the last federal election more than 9.4 million eligible voters did not vote. The largest group was youth – nearly two out of every three people between the ages of 18 and 24 didn’t cast ballots. In contrast, the Conservative party won its majority in 2011 by only 6,201 votes in 14 closely contested ridings.

Brigette DePape, widely known for her brave act of standing up in the Senate holding up a “Stop Harper” sign, is leading a new Council of Canadians’ campaign aimed at inspiring a movement of young and first-time voters to “Go Vote!”

Through these efforts we hope to engage and inspire 1 million young voters and build momentum to Election Day.

In March and April DePape was on the “Game Changer Tour” in six cities across Canada, connecting with young voters, equipping them with knowledge, and galvanizing them to take action in the lead-up to the election. More tour stops are being planned as the federal election date draws nearer.

DePape is speaking with youth on their turf, peer to peer. Studies reveal a strong correlation between personal contact and increased voter turnout. She is working with students and community leaders to organize creative actions and canvass in swing ridings to reach out to other young voters.

Through these efforts we hope to engage and inspire 1 million young voters and build momentum to Election Day.

Informed and empowered youth can be the game changers in the 2015 federal election.

For more information about the Council of Canadians’ Game Changers campaign, visit our website at www.canadians.org/iwillvote.
Twenty-two years ago, the United Nations General Assembly declared March 22 World Water Day. In a world facing a severe and growing water crisis without a road map, this day is more important than ever.

Our collective abuse of water has caused the planet to enter “a new geologic age” – a “planetary transformation” akin to the retreat of the glaciers more than 11,000 years ago. This is according to 500 renowned scientists brought together in Bonn at the invitation of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in May 2013. A majority of the world’s population lives within 30 miles of water sources that are badly impaired or running out, the scientists said.

The water crisis is also our greatest security threat. This is according to 900 global experts asked to assess the world’s biggest global risks in advance of the World Economic Forum’s annual meeting. Another global study warns that by 2030, demand for water will outstrip supply by 40 per cent. Lack of access to clean water is already by far the greatest killer of children.

While recognized as real, the water crisis is usually seen as a symptom of climate change, itself caused by excessive greenhouse gas emissions. Droughts are almost always reported as the result of climate change. While no doubt greenhouse gas emission–driven climate change does have an important and negative impact on watersheds, warming temperatures and speeding up evaporation, there is another story that needs to be told.

Massive water diversion for flood irrigation and the over-exploitation of groundwater has left large areas of the world without water. The destruction of the Aral Sea and Lake Chad – once the fourth and sixth largest lakes in the world respectively – was not caused by climate change. It was a result of relentless extraction for commodity exports.

The drought crisis in California is not caused by climate change per se, but rather by the massive engineering of the state’s water supplies to provide for a handful of powerful farmers. A huge amount of the state’s water is exported as “virtual water” embedded in export commodities. The Ogallala Aquifer is not being depleted by climate change, but by unrelenting extraction, mostly for corn ethanol.

Removing water from water-retentive landscapes leaves behind parched lands and desertification, another cause of the water crisis. Removing vegetation from water-retentive landscapes changes the water patterns forever. The current crisis in Brazil – once a water-rich country – is largely due to the destruction of the rainforest. Take down the forests and the hydrologic cycle is negatively affected.

Because the water crisis is misdiagnosed, we do not have the right solutions to solve the crisis. World leaders, elected officials and international institutions wrap the water crisis in with their research and deliberations on climate change. If water is mentioned at all, it is as one more victim of climate change, almost always attributed solely to the burning of fossil fuels. The fact that destroying water-retentive landscapes is a major cause of climate change is not part of the analysis or discussion in climate change circles.

As a consequence, flawed as it is, there is a very serious process to deal with climate change, including an annual climate summit every December and multiple preparatory meetings in between. But there is no corresponding process to deal with the global water crisis.

Water must be addressed as an issue in and of itself. There is an urgent need to create a global recovery plan for water. Key components would include watershed protection, conservation and restoration, and strong local, national and international commitments to put water protection at the heart of all laws and policies, among other things.

Five years ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a historic resolution. It recognized water and sanitation as fundamental human rights. It is urgent that the United Nations and world leaders now take the next step toward a water-secure future. They need to commit to creating a global water recovery plan for water that has its own convention, plan of action, and the resources needed to meet the greatest threat of our time.

Maude Barlow is the National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians and has been a leader in the fight for the human right to water. This article originally appeared on the website Common Dreams.
The Council of Canadians has been built on the vision and determination of people across Canada who believe a better Canada – and a better world – are possible.

Our many campaign efforts are almost entirely supported by generous donations from people like you. And our independence as an organization is maintained by not accepting any money from corporations or governments. This independence allows us to speak out clearly and freely with a powerful, collective voice.

Join us in reflecting on the positive change you helped make possible in 2014.
Taking action

With a network of 60 volunteer chapters across Canada, we organize hard-hitting campaigns to protect water, strengthen public health care, and demand trade and climate justice.

There are many people who help in these efforts, including our tireless Chairperson Maude Barlow, our national Board of Directors, our staff in Ottawa and regional offices across Canada, our chapter activists who put these campaigns and progressive issues into action, and of course, our committed supporters who make it all possible.

Fighting for fair elections

Early in 2014, the Harper government announced election rule changes in its so-called “Fair” Elections Act. The new rules would have made it harder for some people – including students, the elderly and Indigenous people – to vote. It would prevent the Chief Elections Officer from sharing important information with voters, such as investigations into election fraud, which we saw in the 2011 federal election. And it would put an end to public outreach campaigns encouraging people, especially youth, to vote.

With the Canadian Federation of Students, we helped organize rallies across the country. We delivered more than 80,000 petitions to Parliament Hill, calling for the “Unfair” Elections Act to be dumped. While the Conservative government removed some of the most egregious parts of the proposed rule changes, it did not go far enough. So once again we joined with the Canadian Federation of Students to launch a constitutional challenge to the parts of the act that infringe on democracy.

Your generous support has ensured that the fight to protect everyone’s right to vote freely in elections will be heard.

Supporting Indigenous struggles

The Council of Canadians works closely with Indigenous peoples in our campaigns. In June 2014, we celebrated a Supreme Court of Canada decision that granted the Tsilhqot’in title over lands in British Columbia. The Council of Canadians and our Williams Lake chapter were interveners in the case in support of the Tsilhqot’in claim. Our submission argued for the recognition
of title more broadly and liberally, rather than just for isolated pockets of land. This was the first time the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled on a specific claim to title, and experts say it could be the most important case in the history of Aboriginal rights development in Canada.

**Protecting water**

The Council of Canadians has always been willing to wade into a water fight. In 2014, we drew attention to how moving extreme energy, including tar sands shipments, pipelines and fracked gas, on the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River puts these important waterways, which millions of people rely on for drinking water, in danger.

We continued to turn more communities “blue” with our Blue Communities Project. This project gives people the tools they need to encourage their local governments to recognize water as a human right, promote publicly financed water and wastewater facilities, and ban the purchase and sale of bottled water in public facilities. In 2014 we celebrated Tay Township in Ontario; Cambuquira, Brazil; and Zurich, Switzerland all becoming Blue Communities.

The Council’s Blue Planet Project works globally for water justice with allies from around the world to inform, motivate and inspire people and governments to implement the United Nations’ declaration of water as a human right. In 2014, we worked with local organizations to bring international attention to Detroit, Michigan, where thousands of people unable to pay their soaring water bills, face water shut-offs. In July, Maude Barlow, along with members of our Windsor chapter, delivered 1,000 litres of public water to Detroit as a symbol of solidarity.

We also put a spotlight on the Canadian government’s shameful record on the right to water, particularly as it relates to mining and the commodification of water abroad. We lobbied for action here in Canada, where many communities, including First Nations, do not have access to the clean water resources they need to live.

**Energy East is “Our Risk – Their Reward”**

Our campaign to stop TransCanada’s massive Energy East pipeline project, which, if built, would ship 1.1 million barrels of oil per day, picked up steam in 2014. We visited many communities along the pipeline’s route to raise awareness and connect with local groups saying “no” to the pipeline. We are effectively building a wall of grassroots resistance to TransCanada’s broken pipeline plan and promoting what Canadians really want: clean energy alternatives to tar sands expansion.

In 2014 we released two hard-hitting reports about the pipeline: Where Oil Meets Water addresses the risks the pipeline poses to more than 90 watersheds and 960 waterways along its route between Alberta and New Brunswick. In the report Energy East: When the pipeline spills, we looked at TransCanada’s pipeline safety record and revealed the devastating damage a toxic bitumen spill would cause.

Our campaign must have been hitting the mark because in November Greenpeace released leaked documents that showed TransCanada had hired Edelman, an American public relations firm known for its dirty tactics, to discredit the Council of Canadians and other groups working to stop this massive project.

With 350.org and Leadnow, we launched a “People’s Intervention” to convince the National Energy Board, the approval body for the project, to take climate impacts into account when evaluating the pipeline project.

With growing concern about the grim realities of climate change and diminishing energy resources globally, we support communities fighting energy projects that will destroy their land, water and air. We continue to push the Canadian government for strong policies that protect our environment and focus on renewable and sustainable energy solutions.

**No fracking way!**

The fight against fracking intensified in 2014 as we called on the federal government to ban the extraction process that uses massive amounts of water, chemicals and sand to get at trapped underground gas reserves. Across the country, awareness is growing about the negative impacts of fracking, which
include contaminated water, health concerns, pollution and more.

To help people in communities across Canada win the fight against fracking, we launched an on-line “Fractivist’s Toolkit.” The toolkit includes information about fracking happening across Canada, case studies of what people have done to stop fracking in their communities, and ways to take action. Find it on-line at www.canadians.org/fractivists.

In 2014, we celebrated New Brunswick’s moratorium on fracking, and we continue to push for bans across Canada.

**Pushing for fair trade**

The Council of Canadians’ 30-year history is rooted in speaking out against trade deals that hurt people, the environment and social policies.

In 2014, we continued the fight against the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) here in Canada and overseas. We called on the federal government to make the details of the deal public. We submitted an Access to Information request for the text of a deal so Canadians could see exactly what was being promised in the deal. Unsurprisingly, the Harper government denied the request.

We presented concerns about the deal at a parliamentary trade committee meeting, and celebrated when a German television show released the full text. As expected, the deal includes controversial investor-state dispute settlement rights that will allow corporations to sue governments for policies and laws that impede their profits. Germany stated it would not sign on if the deal includes those investor-state provisions.

Council chapters also rallied against the secrecy of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a free trade zone of 12 countries including Canada, representing 40 per cent of the world’s economy. Chapter members and supporters took part in a continental day of action against the TPP. In July, we blew the lid on the secret location of TPP meetings with a large banner in the shape of a very big arrow.

**Strengthening public health care**

The Harper government has made it clear it does not support a new health care accord. The government let the previous deal expire in March.

We are pushing for a new accord that strengthens and expands medicare to include a national pharmacare program and better long-term care, home care and mental health care so people have access to the services they need. But more importantly, we are sounding the alarm about the Harper government’s systematic dismantling of our public health care system.

In 2014 we joined with CUPE for the “Save Our Public Health Care” tour that included 16 town halls in eight different provinces. We held numerous workshops in each location and spoke to people about how we can all work in our communities to fight to save our medicare. Council of Canadians and CUPE supporters knocked on almost 50,000 doors across Canada, and chatted with ordinary Canadians about medicare. Everywhere we went Canadians expressed a strong desire to maintain our public health care system.

**Common Causes and sinking the Harper agenda**

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservative government are systematically eroding, dismantling and endangering key programs and values in this
country. Attacks on public services, workers, unions, immigrants, environmental protections and public health care are fundamentally changing Canada as we know it. Massive omnibus budgets have gutted important environmental legislation and much-needed programs. Our public health care system is being systematically dismantled. Non-profit groups that speak out are being targeted with funding cuts or crippling government-enforced financial audits.

Under the banner of “Common Causes,” we continued to build broad support amongst civil society organizations to work together to find ways to collaborate, and challenge and oppose the Harper agenda. This theme carried through to our annual general meeting, which was held in Hamilton, Ontario, in October. The meeting allowed us to forge stronger solidarity with workers, Indigenous peoples and community activists.

**Thank you to our donors**
Our work is made possible by the generosity of like-minded people who believe social, economic and environmental justice is something we must all strive for. With your support, we made a real difference in 2014. We garnered hundreds of media hits, organized major events in communities across Canada and around the world, held conferences and speaking tours, produced educational fact-sheets and hard-hitting reports, provided daily-updated news on our website at www.canadians.org and on social media, and delivered informative articles in Canadian Perspectives.

These remarkable achievements are made possible by your financial contributions. More than $4.1 million was received from donations this fiscal year, which represents 93 per cent of total revenue. Please see the Summary Statement of Revenue and Expenditure that shows our sources of revenue and how we spent this funding.

**Your donations make a difference**
We extend a most heartfelt thank you to all of our donors for supporting our work!

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**The Council of Canadians: Statement of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014**

### Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>June 30, 2014</th>
<th>June 30, 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memberships and contributions - 93%</td>
<td>$4,136,222</td>
<td>$4,762,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program funding contributions - 6%</td>
<td>189,029</td>
<td>299,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest and other - 1%</td>
<td>126,935</td>
<td>73,885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,452,186</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,135,907</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditures</th>
<th>Expenditures 2013-2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Office and Chapter funding</td>
<td>Memberships and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>contributions – 93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaigns</td>
<td>Admin and program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>support – 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>Member services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member services</td>
<td>Regional Office and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Chapter funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings, conferences, newsletters</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Fundraising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin and program support</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23%</td>
<td>Meetings, conferences,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>newsletters 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communications 9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Total Expenditure**                 | **4,525,542**         | **5,421,121** |
| Bequest                               | 54,763                 | 195,666       |
| Net surplus / deficit for the year    | ($18,593)              | ($89,548)     |
| Transferred to Maude Barlow’s SJF     | 0                      | 0             |
| Excess of revenue over expenditure for the year | ($18,593) | ($89,548) |
The Council of Canadians annual general meeting was held in Hamilton, Ontario last October. (Clockwise from top) 1. Pam Beattie (second from left) accepts the “Activist of the Year” award on behalf of Canadian Union of Public Employee’s (CUPE) members. Beattie is joined by Leo Cheverie, Mary Robinson and Maude Barlow. 2. The Council of Canadians plants a maple tree in Hamilton to commemorate the AGM. 3. Keynote speakers John Hilary, John Cartwright, Ben Powless, Maude Barlow, Chief Ava Hill and CUPE President Paul Moist. 4. Council of Canadians chapter activists and supporters attend a rally for good jobs and public services. 5. Council Board member Moira Peters (right) presents chapter activist Norah Chaloner with the Maude Barlow Founder’s Award.
The Council of Canadians Leaves a System Change Legacy

The Council of Canadians supports “System Change, Not Climate Change” and community initiatives that demonstrate real alternatives to the fossil fuel economy. Combined with fundamental policy shifts at the regional, national and global levels, these local community initiatives are the real solutions to the climate crisis our planet faces.

In order to highlight the Council’s commitment to “System Change, Not Climate Change,” we launched a program in 2012 to support local initiatives in communities hosting our annual conference that demonstrate in practice what a better world will look like.

In October 2014 we visited Hamilton, Ontario, for our annual meeting, where we announced that the 2014 recipient of the annual System Change Legacy Award was The Hammer Active Alternative Transportation Co-operative (THAA T Co-op). Established in 2011, ‘THAAT’ became a workers’ co-operative in 2013 with seven founding members to provide sustainable, emission-free delivery services. THAA T Co-op is an example of the exciting community initiatives multiplying across the country and around the world that offer real change and hope for the future.

Help Celebrate 30 Years of Building a Better Canada

This year, our Annual General Meeting moves to Windsor, Ontario, and we are planning an exciting event to celebrate our 30th anniversary. Join us October 23-25 for an action-packed weekend, including a public forum on Friday night, a full day of workshops and panels and a gala dinner on Saturday, the Council’s business meeting on Sunday, and more events to be confirmed.

We look forward to celebrating this special occasion with our supporters, chapter activists and allies.

The Council of Canadians’ Annual Conference and Business Meeting

October 23-25
St. Clair Centre for the Arts
201 Riverside Drive West
Windsor, ON N9A 5K4

Conference Hotel
Waterfront Hotel – Downtown Windsor
277 Riverside Drive West
Windsor, ON N9A 5K4

Conference hotel reservations – book by September 21
To obtain the negotiated group rate of $129 per night + taxes (includes free buffet breakfast) you must book by September 21, 2015. Call toll-free 1-877-973-7829 and identify “The Council of Canadians” group block.

Advance registration: August 5 – October 15
Registration information will be posted on our website at www.canadians.org starting August 5. Advance registration closes at 5:00 p.m. ET October 15.

Resolutions: September 9
Proposed resolutions must be received by September 9. After this date, only emergency resolutions on issues that could not have been foreseen by the deadline date will be considered.

Nominations: September 14
Advance nominations for the Board of Directors must be received by September 14. This allows time for the nominating committee to make recommendations to ensure a diverse Board. Nominations will be accepted at the AGM until 2:00 p.m. ET on Saturday, October 24.

In addition to the regular slate of candidates, two regional chapter representatives to the Board from the Prairies-NWT and Atlantic regions will be nominated and elected in a process exclusive to chapters. These board members will be confirmed by the membership at the annual business meeting (ABM).

Ensure you are a supporter in good standing
Being a Council of Canadians supporter in good standing allows you to vote on policy resolutions at the ABM. To be a supporter in good standing you need to have donated $10 or more at least 30 days before the ABM (by September 25, 2015), and no more than 12 months before October 25, 2015.

www.canadians.org
Lois Little is a member of the Northwest Territories Chapter, which is located in Yellowknife. The chapter was established only a couple of years ago, but has been very active in many campaigns.

**When did you join the Council?**
I have been a supporter of the Council of Canadians for well over 20 years, perhaps even 25 years. I don’t remember when I joined, but I do know that Maude Barlow has always been on my radar and I recall fondly Mel Hurtig and the activism in the 80s that led to the establishment of the Council of Canadians.

**How and when did the Northwest Territories (NWT) chapter get started?**
The NWT Chapter of the Council of Canadians had five founding members and was formally established in early March of 2013. The chapter held its first formal organizational meeting on April 4 of that year in Yellowknife. The NWT chapter grew out of an ad hoc group called the Raging Boomers, who were railing against the assault of the Harper Conservatives on Canadian values, rights, democratic institutions and the environment.

**What are the most important local issues the chapter is working on?**
The NWT chapter is involved in a host of territorial issues, but water and democratic rights and freedoms are likely at the heart of them all. Along with our labour allies we just staged a very successful evening with James Gordon who performed “Stephen Harper the Musical: How to Survive and Thrive in the Dying Days of the Empire of Oil.”

We recently intervened in Husky Oil’s plan to explore for silica/fracking sand and were successful in having this application referred to an environmental assessment. It’s the first fracting-related assessment in the NWT. We are part of the Fracking Action North Coalition that has a petition out at the moment pushing for a comprehensive public review of horizontal hydraulic fracturing. We will also be critiquing the NWT government’s imminent fracting regulations.

We are working with Ecology North to screen Maude’s *Water on the Table* film as part of Canada’s Water Week events. We are monitoring transboundary water agreements between the NWT and Alberta and British Columbia and plan to have a public forum in the spring to talk about how these agreements will be enforced.

We are also planning a Giant Mine Healing Walk as a way of keeping the spotlight on the 237,000 tonnes of arsenic trioxide that is stored underground and poses a threat forever to our water and life.

**What challenges does the chapter face?**
It is difficult to expand our core group of warriors as so many people are afraid to speak out or show dissent for fear of punitive consequences. This will undoubtedly get worse. As such, the risk of burn-out is always there.

**What has been your favourite moment with the Council?**
The Council of Canadians is an inspiring and tremendously supportive organization. We had visits from Maude Barlow and Brigette DePape, which were fun and incredibly helpful. The engagement of territorial Indigenous, labour and environmental leaders with our chapter is also very inspiring.

**What advice would you give to people interested in starting a new chapter?**
Do it! You won’t regret it! We found that after a year or so of being Raging Boomers we were raging in the wilderness with no one hearing our voices. Being part of a national network with the Council of Canadians is so helpful and supportive. After we formed the NWT chapter we found that all of a sudden people started hearing our voices because they recognized the Council as a powerful and influential organization. We found that government was coming to us seeking our opinion, and labour and other organizations were happy to join with us in staging events because we do have influence. We also found that media were coming to us seeking our opinion.

For more information about how to join a chapter in your area, visit our website at www.canadians.org/chapters or call us toll-free at 1-800-387-7177.
Council of Canadians chapters have been active in communities across Canada protecting public health care, working to stop the Energy East pipeline and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals, standing up for democracy, and calling for a national inquiry on murdered and missing Indigenous women. Here are a few highlights.

Protesting health cuts
The London and Windsor-Essex chapters have been working to stop the proposed closure of the obstetrics unit at the Leamington District Memorial Hospital. If the provincial government closes this service, pregnant women would need to travel 50 kilometres to deliver their babies at a hospital in Windsor. The Windsor-Essex chapter participated in a strategy meeting to stop this, while the London chapter recently took part in a protest outside the constituency office of Ontario Deputy Health Minister Deb Matthews.

Pipeline “Our Risk – Their Reward”
Numerous chapters have been organizing against the Energy East pipeline. The Calgary chapter joined with allies outside the National Energy Board (NEB) office to demand that it consider climate change when making its recommendation to the federal government about the pipeline. The Winnipeg chapter spoke at a press conference to say the NEB process would be “illegitimate” if it didn’t include climate change in its review. The Saint John chapter helped local residents fill out the application form to speak at the NEB hearings on the pipeline. The Montreal chapter joined with thousands of students to march against the Energy East pipeline.

And the Thunder Bay chapter spoke against the pipeline at Ontario Energy Board hearings and issued a municipal election report card outlining where the various candidates stood on the project.

LNG pipedreams
Chapters in British Columbia have also been very active countering the provincial government’s agenda to promote LNG terminals and pipelines in their province. These projects would be highly water-consumptive and emit huge amounts of carbon dioxide. Public forums were organized by chapters in Ladner, Powell River, Courtenay, Victoria, Nanaimo and Campbell River.

A musical twist on Harper
Chapters have also been highlighting the Harper government’s record as we move closer to the next federal election, expected on October 19. The Prince Albert, Red Deer and Northwest Territories chapters all hosted performances of the play “Stephen Harper: The Musical” in their communities. The one-person play is reminding audiences in a very entertaining way about the many negative actions taken by the Harper government since it first came to power in 2006.

We need an inquiry
Numerous chapters have been calling on the Harper government to hold an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women. The Peterborough-Kawarthas chapter partnered with Indigenous allies to write a joint letter to the editor in their local newspaper, while the Hamilton, Moose Jaw, Brant and St. John’s chapters also submitted letters to the editor. The Regina chapter helped get a municipal resolution passed that had their city council call on the Harper government to hold an inquiry. And the North Shore chapter highlighted the links between violence against Indigenous women in Canada and the oppression experienced by women in Guatemala often related to Canadian mining companies.

Interested in getting involved? Join a chapter near you! Find a full list of Council of Canadians chapters at www.canadians.org.chapters, or call us toll-free at 1-800-387-7177 for more information.

Chapter Action Updates

Chapter activists Tara Seucharan, Amit Praharaj and Lynne Alton took part in the Act on Climate march in Quebec City in April to call on premiers to take action to address climate change. Chapter members from Montreal, Fredericton, Moncton, York University, Toronto, Ottawa, Northumberland and Mid-Island (Nanaimo) participated. The march drew close to 25,000 people.

In memoriam
The Council of Canadians is saddened by the passing of Comox Valley chapter activist Gwyn Frayne. Gwyn’s activism with the Council of Canadians was noted in numerous campaign blogs. Notably, she spoke out against fracking, the Raven coal mine, high tuition fees for university students, the Northern Gateway pipeline, the purchase of F-35 fighter jets, deep integration with the United States, and on many other issues. She was also a keen supporter of the Peaceful Direct Action Coalition. Gwyn was a caring person who showed us all how to be an exemplary activist and who also gave us an enduring lesson in how to face our own mortality with courage. She will be deeply missed.

The Council of Canadians extends sympathies and condolences to Gwyn’s family, friends and fellow chapter activists.
The Council of Canadians has been fighting to stop the Canada–European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) since a Canada-EU joint study making the case for negotiations was released in October 2008. Almost seven years later, where does the deal stand and what is the likelihood we can defeat it?

The nine formal rounds of negotiations for the deal were completed in October 2011, followed by several meetings to address various outstanding issues, the announcement of a deal in principle in October 2013, and the release of the text at a Canada-EU summit in Ottawa in September 2014. Almost six months later, the deal is still undergoing a “legal scrub” and translation into the 24 official and working languages of the European Union. It is expected that the 28 national legislatures of the European Union could begin voting on it by January 2016 and that the European Parliament could vote on its ratification about a year from now, around April 2016.

In Canada, more than 50 communities, including Toronto, Victoria, Sackville and Hamilton, have called for a municipal exclusion from the agreement. There is an opportunity now to go back to those cities to ask them to take further action against CETA. Unfortunately, cities are still considered to be “creatures of the provinces” and all of the provinces and territories – except for Newfoundland and Labrador at this point – have agreed to the deal. Newfoundland and Labrador withdrew from the deal over a dispute with the Harper government concerning a $400 million fisheries fund related to the loss of minimum processing requirements under the deal.

In Canada, more than 50 communities, including Toronto, Victoria, Sackville and Hamilton, have called for a municipal exclusion from the agreement.

Federally, the Conservatives continue to push for CETA, the Liberals support the deal, the NDP is engaging in a consultation process to determine its position, and the Greens oppose it. The New Democrats have expressed their concern about the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provision in CETA, and have told European leaders that they should not ratify a deal that includes it. In Canada, however, the New Democrats continue to insist that it’s only one aspect of an overall deal. Still, given the deal is not likely to be ratified in Europe before the October 19 federal election, the ratification here will fall to the next government.

In Europe, there is significantly more official opposition to the deal. Both the German and the French governments – the largest and second largest economies respectively in Europe – have stated that CETA should be reopened and the ISDS provision should be amended. While these governments call for various options, including an investment court to replace the role of private arbitration tribunals rather than the complete removal of the provision, the Canadian government refuses to negotiate this matter.

The newly elected Syriza government of Greece has also promised to veto the United States–European Union Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which is similar in nature to CETA. As an opposition party they also clearly expressed their rejection of CETA. Council of Canadians National Chairperson Maude Barlow has written the Greek government asking them to veto CETA.

And in the European Parliament, the top issues of concern appear to be the investor-state provision, concern that the deal could open Europe to genetically modified foods, the weakening of European standards through regulatory convergence, and, given opposition to TTIP, the degree to which U.S. corporations with offices in Canada could use CETA as a proxy TTIP. If the various parties that oppose the ISDS provision hold firm, it is plausible that CETA could be rejected in a ratification vote in the 751-member assembly.

As we enter what will likely be the last year of our fight against CETA, there is reason to be hopeful that together we’ll be able to stop this “free trade” agreement.
I am first and foremost a rancher. I am now also an anti-pipeline activist.

I was 10-years-old when I started my own herd of cattle on my family’s ranch in Nebraska. I learned early, from our 75-year history of ranching, about the value of hard work. I learned the value of our land and water which sustains our herd and our family.

You may wonder, how does a rancher become an activist?

I was at a State Department hearing in 2010 when I first saw the names of my friends, family and neighbours on TransCanada’s proposed Keystone XL pipeline map for Nebraska.

The pipeline was proposed to pass right through the Sandhills, a unique and fragile ecosystem that overlies the Ogallala, a critically important aquifer, at a vulnerable shallow recharge zone. None of my neighbours were activists. We felt alone in our opposition to the pipeline. TransCanada told us separately we were the only ones not signing easements and taking the money they offered. But that was not so.

When I started speaking out, I found my voice. I found there were Nebraskans all across the state who felt the same way. Since then, along with other landowners and citizens in Nebraska and other states, we have fought the pipeline.

And now, I know we have friends in Canada waging a very similar fight against the same company.

I’ve just finished a week of visiting communities in New Brunswick along the Energy East pipeline. The conversations I’ve had with landowners, First Nation members and concerned residents very much remind me of the conversations we had when we were first reckoning with the risks posed by Keystone XL.
We have heard pipeline proponents peddle the same myths.

Like the promises of jobs. These jobs will be mostly short-term. In fact, they are over-advertised to lure people to support the project. They pre-empt the real discussion about how to build a long-term sustainable energy future that keeps young people in smaller communities and helps the economy grow.

We have also been told that Keystone XL would reduce dangerous oil-by-rail traffic.

Pipeline and oil-by-rail industries are largely self-regulated and neither is held to high enough safety standards. Nor are they showing responsibility to communities by being forthright about the chemicals that are passing through waterways either by rail or by pipe.

Industry is after as much capacity – pipeline or rail – as they can get to feed the booms happening in the tar sands and U.S. fracked oil. Approval of either pipeline will add to the risks of communities facing oil-by-rail traffic.

And there are viable alternatives. In fact, Nebraskans built a New Energy Barn featuring solar panels in the Keystone XL path that generates clean energy for Nebraska’s public power grid.

Energy East, just like Keystone XL, is an export pipeline. We are all being asked to bear the risks of a pipeline spill so that foreign corporations can profit.

At 1.1 million barrels per day, Energy East would carry around 300,000 more barrels than Keystone XL would have, making a massive pipeline rupture very possible.

We have a case before the Nebraska Supreme Court pitting three Nebraska landowners fighting to protect their land from eminent domain and the pipeline, against an irresponsible Nebraskan law attempting to fast-track the pipeline route approval process. The law has already been ruled unconstitutional by a lower district court. TransCanada currently has no legal route through Nebraska.

We’ve joined farmers, ranchers and tribal communities from along the pipeline route to form the Cowboy Indian Alliance. This past September we rode our horses into Washington, D.C., and set up camp near the White House to tell President Obama to reject the pipeline.

Which he did.

I am proud to stand beside Canadian friends in this most important fight. We, the people of North America and the world, must work together against money and power to protect our homes, our communities and our planet.

Ben Gotschall is a dairy cattle rancher and Energy Director with Bold Nebraska. In April he joined the Council of Canadians on a tour of some of the communities in the Prairies that would be impacted by the Energy East pipeline if it is built.
Canada’s Lakes and Rivers Lose Legislative Protection

There are now only 100 lakes, 62 rivers and 3 oceans legally protected in Canada under the Navigation Protection Act (NPA). The NPA, which came into force on April 1, 2014, removed protections for the majority of waterways. When it comes to pipeline and powerline projects, the NPA affords no protection to any lake, river or waterway.

The NPA replaced one of Canada’s oldest pieces of legislation, the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA), which was originally put in place to safeguard the navigation of waterways. In 2009, the Harper government began its initial clawback of the NWPA. In a 2009 report on Bill C-10, the budget bill where early amendments to the NWPA appeared, the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources declared, “The Act protects the public right of navigation by regulating works over waterways such as bridges, dams and docks in order to minimize the overall impact on navigation.” Yet Bill C-10 created a tiered classification system that allowed certain projects to be exempted from federal scrutiny.

The final blow for the NWPA came in 2012 in the Harper government’s second omnibus budget bill, Bill C-45. The 450-page bill stripped protections from 99 per cent of the lakes and rivers in Canada and significantly reduced the number of environmental assessments triggered by industrial development on or near waterways. The bill also amended the act’s name to the Navigation Protection Act.

An Access to Information request by Greenpeace revealed that the 2012 budget bill changes to the NWPA, the Environmental Assessment Act, and other environmental legislation were guided by the advice of industry associations.

The scant list of lakes, rivers and oceans that are still protected, outlined in the act’s schedule, does not include some of the largest lakes in the provinces and territories. Smallwood Reservoir, unprotected under the NPA, is the largest lake in Newfoundland and Labrador and feeds the Churchill River, which in turn is the longest river in the province. Some of largest lakes in Quebec are unprotected, including Lac Mistassini, Réserve Gouin and Lac à l’Eau Claire. While several of the large lakes in Ontario are protected, only one of the lakes in Saskatchewan and three lakes in Manitoba larger than 400 square kilometres are protected. None of the lakes larger than 400 square kilometres are protected in Alberta. Glacial-fed Atlin Lake, on the traditional lands of the Taku River Tlingits, is one of the largest lakes in British Columbia and the source of the Yukon River. It is not protected. Of the Yukon and Northwest Territories’ largest lakes, only Great Bear Lake is listed under the act’s schedule for protection.

The Harper government’s 2012 budget bills fanned the flames of discontent amongst Indigenous communities. The federal government not only washed its hands of protecting lakes and rivers, it also ignored the constitutional duty to consult with First Nations. That fall, four Saskatchewan women started Idle No More, a movement that grew over the winter of 2013 and sparked a massive wave of rallies and actions across the country.
Legal challenges
Council of Canadians Political Director Brent Patterson noted in a blog, “In January 2015, the Mikisew Cree First Nation won its legal challenge against Harper’s C-38 and C-45, which removed federal protection for most of the waterways in the traditional territory of the Mikisew Cree in northern Alberta. Federal Court Justice Roger Hughes ruled that the Harper government should have consulted with First Nations before introducing the omnibus bills C-38 and C-45 two years ago.”

Canadian musicians like Sarah Harmer, the Tragically Hip’s Gord Downie, and Feist also spoke out against the changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act. Downie warned that Bill C-45 was “an attack on our democracy.” Mountain Equipment Co-op CEO David Labistour presented a list of 40 recreationally important waterways – half of which are Heritage Rivers – that are no longer protected. Labistour reminded the Senate committee studying the bill that the outdoor recreation industry creates at least 6 million jobs in Canada. This is a significant number when it is compared to the 226,020 jobs – as projected in 2013 – in oil and gas extraction and support activities for mining and oil and gas extraction.

Two and a half years after the legislative changes, many lakes and rivers remain unprotected, and resource and development projects continue to be exempted from environmental reviews. Energy East, North America’s largest proposed pipeline, is exempted from scrutiny under the NPA even though it threatens hundreds of unprotected lakes and rivers. The New Post Creek hydroelectric dam project in Ontario will be built on the unprotected Abitibi River and will not undergo any environmental review. Any liquefied natural gas plant built in British Columbia on an unprotected river would not require federal approval under the act, even if it interferes with navigation on the waterway.

The NPA has an “opt-in” process by which companies can volunteer to have their project reviewed even if it is not required. Transport Canada also provides an “opt-out” option by which a company can request to withdraw their application if they submitted it prior to the legislative changes, which absolves the company of the requirement to obtain federal approval under the act.

While the NPA may look like a blanket delisting of the majority of lakes and rivers across Canada, it is important to note that 89 per cent of the waterways still protected are in Conservative-held ridings. Only 20 per cent of the protected lakes are in ridings held by New Democrats and only 6 per cent are in Liberal ridings.

Shortly after Bill C-45 was introduced, Francis Scarpalegga, Liberal critic for water policy and public safety, wrote, “As a Quebec MP, I am particularly concerned that only four lakes in Quebec will remain protected with these changes. Canada’s waterways across the country are an integral part of our natural environment and part of our world renowned heritage. Protecting them must not be a partisan exercise.”

Since then, the NDP has launched a campaign to reinstate protections to all the lakes and rivers in Canada, starting with the Canadian Heritage Rivers. Since April 2015, NDP MPs have introduced several private member’s bills to restore waterway protections.

With the federal election coming, 2015 will prove to be a significant year. Many hope it will lead to a new course for water and that environmental legislation gutted by the Harper government will be reinstated. Our lakes and rivers should not be sacrificed for the sake of pipelines and oil and gas development.

Act for water!
To mark World Water Day in March, the Council of Canadians launched the #Pledge2Protect our lakes and rivers campaign. We are urging people to take a photo at a lake or river in their community that is no longer protected and encourage their MP and election candidates to pledge to protect it.

Together, we can show the importance of our waterways and get protections put back on 99 per cent of the lakes and rivers in Canada.

Emma Lui is the Water Campaigner for the Council of Canadians.
In Memoriam: Norma Joan Fleury
1933-2013
by Hélène Bertrand

In January, we received a notice that one of our long-time supporters in Powell River, British Columbia, had passed away and that the Council of Canadians was named as a beneficiary of her estate, along with a handful of charities.

Norma Joan first joined the Council in 1997. We knew very little about her apart from her philanthropic history with us. She clearly had a long-standing commitment to social justice, as was shown by her ongoing support, but the only personal contact we’d had with Norma Joan was a note she wrote to us a few years back deploring the fact that not enough people were aware of the Council of Canadians’ work and what we were fighting for.

So I went looking for anyone who could tell me more about Norma Joan – who she was, and what kind of person she was, to have given so generously and so silently.

After a few phone calls, it was Rosemary, a friend from her teen years, who told me more. Norma Joan was indeed a very private person, even with her friends. She had no family, only distant relatives, and had never married. She was a very organized person. She did not spend money on herself, but would do anything for a friend. She was an avid quilter. And she would never go out unless she looked perfect. I also learned that Norma Joan had worked all her life at the Powell River pulp and paper mill. She had started on the floor and, in time, worked her way up to the position of Office Manager.

This last bit of information really stayed with me. Norma Joan would have been in the pulp and paper mill between the 1950s and the 1980s. Even though the Powell River paper mill was the largest pulp and paper mill in the world at the time, as a woman – even as an office manager, which in itself is no small feat for that era – this would not have been the most lucrative of occupations. And yet, her legacy to the Council of Canadians was substantial.

I guess Rosemary was right. Norma Joan did not spend on herself, but would do anything for a friend. And we can only be immensely grateful that she included the Council among her friends.

It’s hard to say if she knew how much this gift would mean to all of the people across Canada working together to build a better Canada, but I like to think that she did. Legacy gifts to the Council of Canadians make all the difference in helping to strengthen both the effectiveness of our current work and our ability to plan for the future. And I believe Norma Joan knew all about planning for the future.

Norma Joan’s legacy will live on. It will live on in every campaign, in every action, and through every one of us at the Council of Canadians as we work together for social justice.

A gift in your will
You can help build a better Canada by planning a legacy gift. A legacy gift is one that you plan today to benefit the Council of Canadians tomorrow. It is a simple, yet powerful, way to carry forward your support for the Council’s work while making a lasting statement about what truly matters to you.

Leaving a gift in your will – as Norma Joan did – can be as simple as adding one line to a new or existing will. In leaving a legacy gift with the Council of Canadians, you empower future generations with the means and hope to bring about the better Canada we know is possible.

For more information please visit our website at www.canadians.org/legacy or call us toll-free at 1-800-387-7177, ext. 244.
This fall, possibly the most significant constitutional challenge in Canadian history will put our medicare on trial. The very founding principle of public health care and one of Canada’s deepest held values – that health care must be delivered based on a person’s need and not the ability to pay – is at stake.

The B.C. government is facing an unprecedented lawsuit (Cambie Surgeries Corporation et al. v. Medical Services Commission et al.) launched by a group of for-profit medical clinic owners. Led by Dr. Brian Day, who has been dubbed “Dr. Profit” in the media, the case will use the courts to smuggle an American-style two-tier health care system into Canada. Even though this case is going to court in B.C. it is a national issue that affects the health care of all Canadians. A decision in favour of the private clinic owners would impact every provincial and territorial health care insurance plan.

For years Dr. Day has been openly ignoring health care laws at the public’s expense. A 30-day audit conducted by the B.C. government in 2012 of Dr. Day’s Cambie Surgery Centre revealed the clinic unlawfully billed nearly $500,000 to patients and the B.C. health care system. The same audit also produced evidence of overlapping claims – where a patient and B.C.’s Medical Services Plan were billed for the same procedure – totalling an additional $66,000. This practice is known as “double-dipping.” This shows what the case is really about: greed, not better care.

If Dr. Day wins, doctors and private insurance companies across Canada could start setting their own prices and charging patients for services. Cambie Surgery Clinic, which is being subsidized by Canadian tax dollars and resources, charges up to six times more than the public system for procedures. This would allow rich people who can afford to pay for health care services jump ahead in the queue while the rest of us wait. It would also mean that all citizens would subsidize the cost of care that only a wealthy few will be able to afford. Ultimately, this case could determine whether we will lose medicare, the public health care our families rely on.

Private care means longer waits
Private clinics have been shown to increase wait times in the public system by “cherry-picking” patients who need straightforward treatments, leaving the complex (and more costly) cases to the public system. Private clinics also poach physicians from the public system since they can earn more in a publicly subsidized private system. Studies continue to show that in addition to higher costs, patients treated in for-profit settings have poorer health outcomes and higher mortality rates than those treated in a public non-profit setting.

What Dr. Day is proposing is a no-win situation for ordinary Canadians.

Now, more than ever, we must demand our governments and leaders protect, strengthen and expand our public health care. The Canada Health Act requires that all Canadians have access to equitable, timely, high quality care. We have the right to demand that a precedent be set to warn other health professionals that illegally profiting off of people who are sick and vulnerable will not be tolerated, and that those who attempt this will be prosecuted. We have the right to demand that Dr. Day and those like him who only see dollar signs in health care stop jeopardizing our most fundamental Canadian value: universal medicare.

Michael Butler is the Health Care 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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You can also find the Council’s Blue Planet Project on social media at facebook.com/BluePlanetProj and on Twitter at @BluePlanetProj. To connect with your local Council of Canadians chapter on social media, visit canadians.org/community and click on the chapter contacts page.

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